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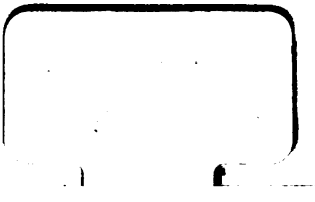

YER
Alexander

MORAL CAUSATION

OR

NOTES ON MR MILL'S NOTES

TO THE CHAPTER ON 'FREEDOM'
IN THE THIRD EDITION OF HIS 'EXAMINATION
OF SIR W. HAMILTON'S PHILOSOPHY'

BY

PATRICK PROCTOR ALEXANDER, M.A.

AUTHOR OF 'MILL AND CARLYLE,' ETC. ETC.

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE.

SOME short time after the publication of Mr John Stuart Mill's 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy' I issued a little book entitled 'Mill and Carlyle.' The first and larger portion of it was, in effect, a criticism of Mr Mill's Chap. xxvi., "On the Freedom of the Will," in which his success, as against Hamilton, did not seem to be great, whilst his own doctrine, as set forth in it—so at least I endeavoured to show—was involved in the most serious confusions. With the reception given to the work, I had, on the whole, no reason to be dissatisfied. It met with rather more recognition than I myself had ventured to expect for it; and on the appearance of Mr Mill's Third Edition, I found that he had done me the honour to controvert me in a series of "Notes" of some length and elaboration. It did not appear to me that Mr Mill took much by his attempt to invalidate my arguments; rather, it seemed that in nearly every instance he could only evade my criticism by rushing into

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blunders more dreadful than those of which originally I had sought to convict him. This I endeavoured to show in a book called 'Moral Causation, being Notes on Mr Mill's Notes,' &c. The success of this work was, sooth to say, not much; I am not aware that any one ever either bought or read it; and the notices of it in the press were few, slight, and for the most part, I rather think, contemptuous.

Meantime its reasonings remained unanswered; and as I had sent Mr Mill a copy of the book, inscribed to him with my best respects—this as the merest matter of course—I consoled myself with the expectation that more or less of his attention would be given to it when he issued his Fourth Edition. It was therefore with some surprise that I came upon this passage in the preface to it: 'Of the assailants to whom I replied '*two only* have published a rejoinder, Dean Mansel 'and Dr M'Cosh;' and that, on turning to the chapter in question, I found the "Notes" to which I had replied *seriatim*, reproduced without note or comment. As it did not the least suit me to be thus dragged through successive editions at the wheels of Mr Mill's conquering chariot, in a series of Notes to which, by implication, I might seem to have been unable to reply, whereas to my own satisfaction I had at almost every point rebutted them, I decided to reissue my book —in a revised and somewhat extended form—thus giving Mr Mill an opportunity of doing in his Fifth Edition what he had not done in his Fourth. This revise I was in process of preparing when the news of Mr

Mill's death reached England. In the general sense of sadness diffused by the premature extinction of so great an intellectual light, my publication must have seemed inopportune, and I therefore resolved to defer it; but the project may be now resumed. The appearance of Mr Mill's 'Autobiography,' and, more lately, of his three 'Essays on Religion,' has stirred a new interest in his opinions on such subjects, which may give to my criticism (in so far as it may be held intelligent) a pertinence which it might not otherwise have possessed. Moreover, in the interval the subject has lost none of its importance; and as intimately related to certain of the current controversies of the time, it is constantly coming up for discussion. Any little bit of accurate thought about it—supposing one capable of such—might thus be held seasonable and appropriate.

Mr Mill himself, as we learn from his Autobiography, attached a rather special value to his own speculations on this particular topic. At pp. 168-170 we find him thus writing:—

'During the later returns of my dejection, the 'doctrine of what is called Philosophical Necessity 'weighed on my existence like an incubus. I felt as 'if I was scientifically proved to be the helpless slave 'of antecedent circumstances; as if my character and 'that of all others had been formed for us by agencies 'beyond our control, and was wholly out of own power. 'I often said to myself, what a relief it would be if I 'could disbelieve the doctrine of the formation of char-

'acter by circumstances; and remembering the wish of 'Fox respecting the doctrine of resistance to govern-'ments, that it might never be forgotten by kings, nor 'remembered by their subjects, I said that it would be 'a blessing if the doctrine of Necessity could be believed 'by all *quoad* the character of others, and disbelieved in 'regard to their own. I pondered painfully on the sub-'ject till gradually I saw light through it. I perceived 'that the word Necessity, as a name for the doctrine 'of cause and effect applied to human action, carried 'with it a misleading association; and that this associ-'ation was the operative force in the depressing and 'paralysing influence which I had experienced; I saw 'that though our character is formed by circumstances, 'our own desires can do much to shape those circum-'stances; and that what is really inspiriting and enno-'bling in the doctrine of free-will, is the conviction that 'we have real power over the formation of our own 'character; that our will, by influencing some of our 'circumstances, can modify our future habits or capa-'bilities of willing. All this was entirely consistent 'with the doctrine of circumstances, or rather was that 'doctrine itself, properly understood. From that time I 'drew in my own mind a clear distinction between the 'doctrine of circumstances and Fatalism; discarding 'altogether the misleading word Necessity. The theory, 'which I now for the first time rightly apprehended, 'ceased to be discouraging, and besides the relief to my 'spirits, I no longer suffered under the burden, so heavy 'to one who aims at being a reformer in opinions, of

'thinking one doctrine true and the contrary doctrine 'morally beneficial. The train of thought which had 'extricated me from this dilemma seemed to me, in 'after years, fitted to render a similar service to others; 'and it now forms the chapter on Liberty and Necessity 'in the concluding Book of my System of Logic.' (It is unnecessary to criticise the above statement, inasmuch as the intellectual confusions which are flagrant in it will be found sufficiently dealt with in Section viii. of the book, and elsewhere.) Not all even of Mr Mill's admirers, however, assign to his reasonings on this subject the value which he himself did. Professor Cairnes, in particular, has expressly recorded his dissent—*vide* passage at the close of his interesting and important paper in the 'Fortnightly Review' of January last, "Mr Spencer on Social Evolution," in which a doctrine is announced, identical with that set forth in the following pages, as that which I believe to be Hamilton's.

'But though the argument we have been pursuing 'does not necessarily involve the question of the Free-'dom of the Will, it cannot be denied that it comes 'into dangerous proximity with that quicksand of philo-'sophic speculation—so much so, indeed, that one needs 'to guide his steps warily if he would avoid its perils. 'I call the question of the Freedom of the Will a quick-'sand, because it is one in which, I frankly own, I have 'never been able to find solid footing. Mr Mill, as is 'well known, tried to explore it, and believed that he 'had reached firm standing-ground (System of Logic,

'Book VI., Chap. ii.) He persuaded himself that he 'could reconcile the power of individuals, by an effort 'of will, to improve their own characters—to make 'them other than they would be but for the effort— 'with the fact that their conduct is determined in every 'act by the relation of the motives presented at the 'time to their characters as formed by all the influences 'which had acted upon them from birth to the moment 'of action. These two positions Mr Mill believed he 'could reconcile. For my part, I must acknowledge my 'inability to follow him through his demonstration. 'Both propositions are, to my apprehension, as true as 'the strongest testimony of consciousness can make any- 'thing, and I therefore accept them both, though I am 'unable to bring them into harmony. The position is, 'no doubt, unsatisfactory, but it seems to be the only 'one open under the circumstances; for I fail to see 'the reasonableness of rejecting a truth supported by 'the strongest evidence vouchsafed to man, because I 'am unable to reconcile it with another which rests 'upon no better foundation.'

And the confusion which Professor Cairnes thus justly suspects in the 'Logic,' he would have found a little worse confounded in the chapter on Hamilton, had he gone to seek for farther light there.

In the course of my argument, I was led into some examination of Mr Mill's "Psychological Theory of Mind" (see p. 149 *et seq.*), and could not but think it, on the whole, an exceedingly shaky speculation. For the sake of completeness, I include in the Appendix to

this volume some criticism of the previous chapter, in which Mr Mill sets forth his "Psychological Theory of Matter." To these speculations also Mr Mill seems to have attributed considerable importance. He speaks of them with some complacency in his Autobiography, as "having perhaps thrown additional light on some of the disputed questions in the domain of Psychology and Metaphysics;" and the latter, the "Psychological Theory of the Belief in an External World," he thought it worth while to reprint *in extenso* at the end of the first volume of his edition of his father's 'Analysis of the Human Mind.' Some inquiry as to what, after all, may be its real value, may thus be not without interest, in aid of any estimate to be formed of Mr John Stuart Mill as a Psychologist.

In parts of this volume there is perhaps some tendency to a little levity of treatment which, to certain "well-constituted minds"—the subjects treated of being of rather serious concernment—may possibly be more or less distasteful. For this I should desire to apologise, if I knew in what terms to do so. Writing pretty much to amuse myself, I choose to do so as I go along; and, this primary object attained, it is my whim perhaps to be a little more indifferent than I should be, as to whether, in thus amusing *myself*, I may not be giving offence to here and there a solemn and serious-minded reader; but if this is to be rated a sin, I submit it is not in the list of the deadly ones.

For the tone which, in certain passages, I find I have allowed myself to adopt to a man like Mr

John Stuart Mill (of insolence as I fear it may be held—or call it, if you will, impertinence), I have only the same excuse to offer. I confess it seems rather a poor one; but I suppose no better can be made of it: what I should probably have censured in another, I do not care to defend in myself. But I particularly beg that for what is merely a little recklessness of literary statement, I may not be held capable of doing *wilful* despite to Mr Mill; a man to whom beyond all others of our time—save only Mr Thomas Carlyle—I acknowledge intellectual indebtedness; who had in his life my sincerest admiration and respect, and whose memory I hold in honour.

P. P. A.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the third edition, lately issued, of his *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*, Mr Mill has made a general 'gaol-delivery' of his critics, giving a list of them in his Preface, and in a series of Notes distributed throughout the work, awarding to each—on the *spot*, as it were, at which his crime was committed—such punishment as its measure of atrocity might seem at his hands to deserve. In that list, as author of a little volume entitled *Mill and Carlyle*, I find myself included; and in certain 'Notes' of some length to the chapter 'On the Freedom of the Will'—on which subject it was that I presumed to call Mr Mill's argument in question—I receive, in reward of my presumption, such stripes as he has deemed due to my offence. Mr Mill is so great a man, it would almost be a pleasure to be kicked by him; to be criticised by him, I regard as mere honour done me,—and would tender him, very sincerely, my thanks for his

little civilities. These I proceed to reciprocate, in some sort of free-and-easy fashion, by a series of Notes on Mr Mill's Notes. Mr Mill having taken the trouble to *write me*, as it were, it is the merest suggestion of courtesy that he should not be left without reply. Whatever comes from Mr Mill must needs be deserving of every attention, *as* coming from him, even if not specially otherwise. What has here come from him—some trivial points excepted, which I willingly score in his favour—asks only a very little attention, to be answered, as I venture to think, with quite conclusive effect.

Against nothing in Mr Mill's observations—conceived as they are throughout in that spirit of admirable courtesy which, as exercised to his other assailants, he also extends to me—have I personal cause of complaint. Complimentary, of course, they could not be; and if here and there they are edged with some touch of caustic scorn, this also was merely of course, and, as simply in the nature of the case, cannot possibly have matter of offence in it. Mr Mill must either have despised *my* reasonings, or conceived some little contempt for *his own;* had he chosen the latter alternative, I should ever after have held him unworthy of the name of Philosopher. To one only remark of Mr Mill do I feel called upon to take objection, as having read it with positive pain:—'Mr Alexander's perpetual

'insinuations, and more than insinuations, of *bad faith*, 'since he makes a kind of retractation of their *grossest* 'meaning, in one line of his essay, I pardon, as one of 'the incidents of his rollicking style.' As to the epithet applied to my style, it seems neither here nor there. Perhaps it is meant by Mr Mill as complimentary; and even were the reverse of a compliment intended in it, this I should readily 'pardon,' as, it may be, no more than 'one of the incidents' of Mr Mill's extreme distaste for certain of the arguments so conveyed, to which, as it seems, he can reply with no better effect than we shall see him do. What *does* give me real pain is, that Mr Mill should suppose me capable of supposing *him* capable of anything properly to be termed 'bad faith.' What can I do, in such a case, more than merely reiterate the frank disclaimer already made, to which Mr Mill alludes? Not guilty —at least in *intention*—I once more distinctly plead. If this be not enough for Mr Mill, who holds that 'the '*motive* has nothing to do with the morality of the 'action,' I am helpless, except to suggest, that perhaps his own Utilitarian Theory, which involves that extraordinary *dictum*, is more blamable than I in the matter.

One instance only of this sin alleged against me does Mr Mill condescend to adduce:—'I venture to express 'my opinion in words borrowed from Mr Alexander, 'that it is not his "veritable consciousness." I will

'not imitate Mr Alexander in calling it "a *fraudulent* 'substitute palmed off upon him" by his philosophical 'system.' Mr Mill is at once over-sensitive here, and seems a little to sin in misapprehension. In calling 'a substitute' *fraudulent*, as having passed a deceit on Mr Mill, I could scarcely intend to imply in Mr Mill *fraud* in his having been deceived by it. Between the thimblerigger and his victim, I must seriously impress on Mr Mill that the logical distinction is clear. It seems odd he should force me to do such a thing.

Mr Mill (I beg pardon for lingering over this point, but in relation to one or two of my coming criticisms of Mr Mill it is essential it should be clearly made out) permitted himself to insinuate against Professor Mansel some suspicion of his tampering with his intelligence in the interest of a certain system of belief to which he stood pledged. To Mr Mansel's slightly indignant rejoinder he now in his turn rejoins that, while 'no imputation was in-'tended, the effect of men's necessities of position on 'their opinions, as well as conduct, is far too widely 'reaching and influential an element in human affairs 'to be *always* passed over in silence for fear of offend-'ing personal susceptibilities.' Might I venture to suggest to Mr Mill, without seeming impertinent, that *no* 'necessity of position' can be more trying to a man's candour than the position—as I take it, his own

—of standing fully committed before the world to a helplessly bad argument? I am not aware that Professor Mansel is pledged to any of his beliefs more deeply than Mr Mill intellectually is to what he calls a 'Doctrine of Moral Causation,' which is neither Freedom nor Fate, but is supposed to hover somewhere between the two. Suppose that by the rule of two and two make four it should be *proved* that this darling birth of Mr Mill's philosophical genius could positively hover nowhere except in some *limbo* of the contradictory or the unintelligible, what would be sure to occur? Mr Mill would instantly proceed to develop the scepticism already latent in him as to any positive necessity in two and two to be *four*. Believing, as already he does (*vide* pp. 86, 87),[1] that perhaps there may be somewhere a world in which two and two, on coming together, are found to have sprouted a fifth, so as to be accurately *five*, the inference could not but come easy to him that perhaps occasionally in this world such a thing *might* occur; and 'the two and two' of the argument would be shown—we need not doubt, with much ingenuity—to be exceptional to the general rule, in mere purchase of herrings or the like admitted. But supposing all this, should we surmise in Mr Mill 'bad faith' in it? Not in the least; only extremely

[1] Mr Mill's third edition, from which, unless expressly it is otherwise stated, all extracts are taken.

bad argument, almost in a manner *forced* upon him by the sad 'necessity of position,' involved in his natural affection as a parent for his rickety philosophical offspring. To 'look on truth askance and strangely' is almost of needs involved in the very taking up with its opposite. The most candid of men will play a little fast and loose with you in argument, rather than admit the error he is unable, as unwilling to see, in a hitherto cherished opinion. Almost, I might say, that the man who does not fear that, in such a case, he himself might be found overlooking the thing before his eyes, and seeing something else round the corner—turning himself hither and thither, and, in order to evade a difficulty, indulging in clever wily twists, which might do credit to the old serpent—is somewhat over-confident of his own virtue, and a little to seek in self-knowledge. But a man may really *not* see the thing which is before his eyes; and in thinking he sees round the corner, his *bona fides* may be as perfect as Mr Mill can possibly desire that even his own should be considered. Some little obliquity of vision I may have in the following pages at points to allege in Mr Mill; but I only allow myself to allege it as a *natural* obliquity—under the 'necessity of position.' Imputation against him of anything to be called 'bad faith' most positively and *in toto* I disclaim. Nevertheless, in case some offence should again arise in the trick of indiscreet ex-

pression, might I simply beg of Mr Mill once more to make charitable allowance for it, as 'an incident of my rollicking style.' I admit it the reverse of Academic, but in vain should I toil to make it so. Be it 'rollicking,' as Mr Mill styles it, or 'disgustingly flippant,' as others have been good enough to call it, I fear it is quite past praying for. Without more ado of preface, already more than enough, I pass to the consideration of Mr Mill's Notes, as they occur in his Book, *seriatim*.

I.

Mr Mill's Note—*page* 554.

'Sir W. Hamilton thinks it a fair statement of the Free-will doctrine that it supposes our volitions to be uncaused; but the "Inquirer" considers this a misstatement, and thinks the real Free-will doctrine to be that "*I*" am the cause. I prefer the other language as being more consistent with the use of the word cause in other cases.' 'Instead of saying that "*I*" am the cause, the Inquirer should at least say some state or mode of *me*, which is different when the effect is different; though what state or mode this could be, unless it were a will to will (the notion so justly ridiculed by Hobbes), it is difficult to imagine. I persist, therefore, in saying, with Sir W. Hamilton, that on the Free-will doctrine volitions are emancipated from Causation altogether.'

I am not, of course, concerned to defend the 'Inquirer;' but I may note, in passing to what more properly touches myself, that he has at least the authority of Reid, whatever it may be worth, for his mode of stating the case. *Vide* Reid—'A *free* action 'is an effect produced by a being who had power and

'will to produce it; therefore it is not an effect without 'a cause.' Elsewhere—'The cause must either be the 'person himself, whose will it is, or some other being. 'The first is as easily conceived as the last. If the 'person was the cause of that determination of his own 'will, he was free in that action,' &c.—(*Reid on the Active Powers.*) The statement of the 'Inquirer' is thus in so far justified; but, along with Sir W. Hamilton, I am quite in agreement with Mr Mill that this announcement of 'I' as the cause, is, on any ground of mere *logic* (and as distinguished from the line of reasoning which seeks to carry the subject into a region which *transcends* logic by identifying the will with the mystery of the human personality), quite futile for the purpose of the Free-will argument. 'If the person 'was the cause of that determination of his own will, 'he was *free* in that action.' How so? Unless as cause of *that* action the man had a power to do *otherwise*, to constitute himself cause of a *different* action, he was not, according to definition, *free*. And surely, to be cause of *one* action implies in us no power, at the instant, to abolish ourselves as cause of *that* action, and become cause of *another*.

As to Mr Mill's difficulty about 'the state or mode 'of the *me*, which is different when the effect is dif- 'ferent,' I am unable to see how there should have been difficulty for him in so exceedingly plain a matter. Surely the *desire* is such a state or mode of the Me. When we say that 'the *man* is the *cause* of his action,' we must mean, if distinctly we mean anything, the

man, as at the instant, specially determined in desire —the desire of the man in fact—the *motive*.[1] It seems thus plain that by announcing 'the man' as cause, nothing is really gained. We do not in the least evade the force of the main argument of the opponent, which represents the act as determined unconditionally by the balance of the desires and aversions.

As to Mr Mill's 'Sir W. Hamilton thinks it a fair statement,' &c., with his final 'I *persist*, therefore, in 'saying, *with Sir W. Hamilton, that on the Free-will* '*doctrine volitions are emancipated from Causation* '*altogether*,' it may readily be shown that Mr Mill here is plainly erroneous; and—though not, indeed, without excuse in certain confusions of exposition in his opponent—completely misapprehends Hamilton's real doctrine. But of this hereafter, at large, *apropos* of Mr Mill's Note, p. 582, in which he expressly invites me to the discussion.

[1] A motive is "a desire or aversion." For this clear, and every way unexceptionable definition, I rather think the subject is indebted to Mr Mill, though it is pointed at by previous writers, as by Hamilton in his "Mental Tendency;" by Leibnitz (in his curious controversy with Clarke) when he says, "The Mind acts by virtue of the Motives, which are its *dispositions to act* (des Motifs, qui sont ses *Dispositions* à agir);" and not improbably by many others. Mr Mill does not, however, quite invariably confine himself to this use of the word as defined by him.—(*Vide* page 83.)

Motiveless or uncaused volition—as to this, see Appendix, Note I.

II.

NOTE—*page* 565.

'IN answer to the statement that "what I am *able* to do "is not a subject of consciousness," Mr Alexander says (p. 22 *et seq.*):—"Perhaps it is not; but what I *feel* I am "able to do is surely a subject of consciousness. As to Mr "Mill's 'consciousness is not prophetic; we are conscious of "what is, not of what will, or can be,' it seems enough to say, "that if we are conscious of a free force of volition continu- "ously inherent in us, we are conscious of what *is*." If we can be conscious of a force, or feel an ability *independently of any present or past exercise thereof*, the fact has nothing similar or analogous in all the rest of our nature. We are not conscious of a muscular force continuously inherent in us. If we were born with a cataract, we are not conscious, previous to being couched, of an ability to see. We should not feel able to walk, if we had never walked, nor to think, if we had never thought. Ability and force are not real entities, which can be felt as present when no effect follows; they are abstract names for the happening of the effect on the occurrence of the needful conditions, or for our expectation of its happening.'

I must confess myself in some difficulty with the clause I have put in italics, illustrated, as it is, by what follows. If nothing is to be held valid as consciousness unless it can be shown to exist in consciousness, antecedent to the special experience through which it is in consciousness educed, it should seem that the very possibility of consciousness is denied, an impossible consciousness *before* consciousness being needed to constitute its validity. We are not conscious of *sensation*, as Mr Mill seems good enough to admit, 'independently of any present or past exercise of' our sensitive susceptibility; only on the application of the appropriate stimulus, is the organ stung into activity, and sensation evoked in consciousness. We do not, however, on that account discredit our consciousness of sensation. So of Force —it may very well be, that solely by our *exercise* of force, is that force revealed to us in consciousness; is it therefore to be denied, that when we consciously exercise force, we are conscious of force in its exercise? Mr Mill would seem to maintain this; and he is welcome of course to his denial, though I cannot profess to understand it.[1]

[1] When a philosopher assures me that, in the act of knocking another down, let us say—in the light of the sole interview between Adam Smith and Dr Johnson, which so much amused Sir Walter Scott,* it

* Note contributed by Scott to Croker's Edition of Boswell:—
"Mr Boswell has chosen to omit, for reasons which will be presently obvious, that Johnson and Adam Smith met at Glasgow; but I have been assured by Professor John Miller that they did so, and that Smith, leaving the party where he

'We are not conscious of a muscular force continuously inherent in us.' It is not asserted that we are; not the less we are conscious, and only conscious, of ourselves, as living force, self-exercised in various modes, of which the muscular mode is one. 'If we are born with a cataract, we are 'not conscious, previous to being couched, of an 'ability to see!' Of this, after careful study, I can make no more than an announcement of the not very

is perhaps allowable to suppose such a compliment as this passing between two philosophers—he is conscious of no exercise of *force* or *power*, except in the sense of knowing the meaning of his words, I certainly do not understand him; though I can quite understand how, as accepting Dr Brown's Analysis of Causation—in which *Power*, whilst retained as a *word*, is emptied of all real meaning, and virtually extruded from the universe—he might come to make such an assertion. And from this point of view it is, of course, that Mr Mill here writes throughout. On the other hand, we find Professor Mansel, as representative of a different school of thought, thus writing: 'My first and 'only presentation of power or causality is thus to be found in my con-'sciousness of *myself willing*; every man who has been conscious of an 'act of will has been conscious of *power* therein; and to any one who 'has not been so conscious, no verbal description can supply the 'deficiency' (*Prolegomena Logica*, p. 139). When divergencies of thought are, as here, fundamental, all argument, of course, is simply so much mere waste of words.

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had met Johnson, happened to come to another where Miller was. Knowing that Smith had been in Johnson's society, they were anxious to know what had passed, and the more so, as Smith's temper seemed much ruffled. At first Smith would only answer—'He's a brute—he's a brute!' But on closer examination it appeared that Johnson no sooner saw Smith than he attacked him for some point of his famous letter on the death of Hume. Smith vindicated the truth of his statement. 'What did Johnson say?' was the universal inquiry. 'Why, he said,' replied Smith, with the deepest impression of resentment—'he said, "*You lie!*"' 'And what did you reply?' 'I said, "You are a son of a ——."' On such terms," concludes Sir Walter, "did these two great Moralists meet and part; and such was the classical dialogue between two great teachers of Philosophy."

recondite fact, that in order to see we must first have an eye to see with. 'We should not feel able to 'walk if we had never walked,' &c. Of course *not;* and Mr Mill, in turn, will perhaps admit, that without first *being* able to walk, we should never either have walked, or *felt able* so to do. But how these obvious truisms, that we cannot see without eyes, or walk without being able to walk, prove Mr Mill's conclusion from them, that 'force is no real entity,' meantime remains obscure to me. They seem quite as much to favour the opposite conclusion, that *force* is the *only* real entity, of the two perhaps the more intelligible, and likely to meet with acceptance.

'It is of course possible that this may be all wrong,' writes Mr Mill ingenuously, instantly after delivering himself as above. It is really just possible, even though Mr Mill is the person so delivering himself. That the Ego primarily reveals itself in consciousness as an *energy*, and as such is, in consciousness, self-recognised throughout, is an opinion which may be held; which has been held by philosophers of some note; which Professor Ferrier,[1] in particular, seems to have a good deal to say for; and which Mr Mill, however for himself he may decline to entertain it, will find it not easy to disprove. But in truth, it would be idle to concern one's self further with what seems merely a frivolous verbal dispute. The consciousness of Freedom asserted is sufficiently defined

[1] *Vide* "Remains"—Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness.

as a natural, universal, ineradicable belief, feeling, or conviction of mankind, finding its ratification under the ancient canon of *Semper, ubique, ab omnibus.* About the *ab omnibus* there is, however, some little difficulty; for though some exceedingly stout Necessitarians have admitted that they *had* such a feeling, while clearly convinced of its absurdity, others of the school, among whom Mr Mill is to be numbered, protest they have not any feeling of the kind, nor ever had.[1] This 'practical feeling' of Freedom—of a power in us to have willed and done otherwise than as we did—was never yet, that I know of, denied, however, by any one who had not, as philosopher, committed himself to the opposite theory. The suspicion, as inference, seems reasonable that the theory and the denial stand related, as in some sort cause and effect. From this point of view it was that I ventured to suggest, as the proper authority in the matter, 'the 'general consciousness of the race, *philosophers with* ' *rigour excepted.*' Taking literally this sweeping exclusion, really meant as no more than a bit of *quasi*-humorous exaggeration (I admit there seems no mighty humour in it), Mr Mill treats me, in regard of it, to a little easy, but not, as it seems to me, exceedingly felicitous sarcasm. 'If this,' he says (the tendency, that is, to interpret facts in conformity with 'precon-' ceived opinion'), 'be the normal effect of Philosophy;

[1] Not in the strictest sense accurate as regards Mr Mill, who steadily, and even, as we shall see, *obstinately*, declines to give any distinct deliverance as to his genuine feeling in the matter. (See next Section).

'if the effect of cultivating our power of mental dis-
'crimination be to pervert it, let us close our books,
'and accept Hodge as a better authority in meta-
'physics than Locke or Kant; and, I suppose, in as-
'tronomy than Newton.' Well, if *this* is not accurately to be called the '*normal* effect of philosophy,' which has other effects less questionable, it is not unfrequently *one* effect. Does Mr Mill really deny this? He can scarcely intend to do so, I should say, judging from the remark (p. 620) in his comparison of Kant and Hamilton—'but in ability to discern psychological
'truths, *uncoloured by a theory*, he (Kant) seems to me
'inferior to Hamilton.' Kant, in his observation of the facts of consciousness, had, it seems, then—in common with Mr Mill and others—a trick of looking at them through the coloured medium of his theories. Mr Mill will perhaps not decline to admit that Hodge, as not having *any* theories, has, at least to *that* extent, distinctly the advantage of Kant. As to 'Hodge being
'a better authority in *metaphysics* than Kant, and, I
'suppose, in *astronomy* than Newton,' Mr Mill must have been aware, in writing this, that he only attained his little points at some expense of intellectual confusion. But perhaps he was so pleased with his points, he thought he had them cheap at the price. As regards the particular consciousness in question, I don't mind saying, with all plainness, that I consider the despised Hodge—admitted somewhat the inferior in the matters of astronomy and metaphysic—greatly preferable, as an authority, to Mr Mill; and if I can

clearly show—as I shall find no difficulty in doing—that Mr Mill, whilst quite declining to admit that he has this feeling of Freedom, has it all the same, just as Hodge has, I think I shall have shown fair ground for my preference of the last-named philosopher.

Meantime, to proceed with Mr Mill's note: 'Mr 'Alexander denies that the belief that I was free to 'act can possibly be tested by experience, *a posteriori*; 'since experience only tells me the way in which I 'did act, and says nothing about my having been able 'to act otherwise.' What I said was in effect this,—that experience—as Mr Mill uses the term in the passage I was engaged in criticising—experience, *simpliciter*, or in its separate items, as distinct from the reasoned 'induction from experience,' on which he elsewhere relies, and the force of the argument from which it is fruitless to seek to evade,[1] can 'neither confirm nor invalidate' our consciousness of Freedom, as asserted. On this obvious ground—our sole possible experience is, that of *two* alternatives we have chosen *one*; from this experience there can certainly be no inference in us of a power to have chosen the *other*; and as little can there be inference in us of defect in such a power; for supposing such power to exist in us, we could still have only chosen *one* of the alternatives, though, *possibly*, it might have been the *other*. Experience tells us what we *did*; as to what we *could*

[1] In so far, that is, as it amounts to a demonstration of the Causation of human actions; but this, again, amounts, as we shall see, to no *contradiction* of the fact of human Freedom (p. 137).

do, it tells us something; as to the *other* thing which we did not do, it makes no deliverance whatever, either of *could* or *could not*. Mr Mill's reply to this ought, I think, as coming from such a man, to take rank as a curiosity of literature, in this particular branch of it:—'Mr Alexander's idea of the 'conditions of proof by experience is not a very 'enlarged one. Suppose that my experience of myself 'afforded two undeniable cases, alike in all the mental 'and physical antecedents, in one of which cases I 'acted in one way, and in the other in the direct 'opposite; there would then be proof by experience, 'that I had been able to act either in the one way or 'the other.' There would, indeed, *then* be proof, as stated. But nobody living ought to know better than Mr Mill, that his instance of experience supposed is one utterly impossible; that 'two *undeniable* cases, alike 'in *all* the mental and physical antecedents' never occurred, or *could* occur, either in *his* 'experience of 'himself,' or in any other person's experience; that the mere difference in point of time, in itself inessential for the argument, must needs involve and necessitate other and most essential differences in the 'mental and 'physical antecedents,' so that the identity supposed 'undeniable' would not only be extremely deniable, but is not, without plain absurdity, to be asserted. Surely in the *second* of Mr Mill's two cases supposed, there could not but be present a whole series of antecedents, *not* present in the *first;* to wit, the highly important series *evolved by the first case itself*, the

antecedent of having acted *so*, with other antecedents to be summed as the intermediate result of his having so acted. In this obvious consideration alone, were there no others, Mr Mill's supposition is stultified. Its futility may be further made manifest, by considering how Mr Mill would deal with such a case as that put by himself, if he found it alleged *against* him. Constantly it occurs that a man who in certain circumstances has acted in a particular way, on a recurrence of circumstances which *seem* to be precisely similar, is found, on some incalculable whim or caprice, to act in a way quite different. Dr Reid was capable of drawing from such a case an inference of human Freedom. Does Mr Mill admit the inference? Not in the least; he would scout with scorn the notion that the two sets of antecedents, however they might *seem* to be *alike*, actually *were so;* and infer some subtle occult difference in the causes to account for the difference in the effect. No amount of evidence would, in such a case, avail to convince Mr Mill of the identity of the two sets of antecedents. It is, however, *possible*, according to Mr Mill, to find 'two *undeniable* cases, alike in *all* 'the antecedents.' Let us suppose Mr Mill to have found them; he has convinced himself, by an accurate and exhaustive analysis, that '*all* the antecedents are *alike;*' the identity is to Mr Mill *undeniable*. And now suppose—unless Mr Mill means boldly to beg the question in his own favour, he must admit the legitimacy of the supposition — that much to Mr Mill's surprise, a *different* action should in the *second* case be

found to ensue! Mr Mill would *then* be bound to admit Freedom. But *would* he admit it? Nothing of the kind, of course; Mr Mill would merely hum and haw a little, as men do when they find themselves in difficulty; surmise, as indeed he well might, that *there must have been some mistake;* that his analysis of the conditions could not have been quite so *exhaustive* as he had supposed it; and conclude with resolutely *denying* the identity before announced *undeniable.* Certainly, wherever he might find himself at a loss, it could scarce be in the reasonings by which he sought to show that in announcing the identity undeniable, he had been somewhat a rash philosopher, and more or less oblivious of principles elsewhere by himself insisted on. It would be well if Mr Mill, in this relation, would bethink him of his own arguments, exhibiting the futility of the 'Experimental Method,' as applied to the phenomena of Society. They equally exhibit its futility, as here applied by himself, to illustrate a psychological problem. No more in the one than in the other field, can the Past, by any possibility, reproduce itself with exactitude sufficient to ground any valid induction. In a word, Mr Mill's supposed 'two 'undeniable cases, *alike* in *all* the mental and physical 'antecedents,' can exist only as a temporary hallucination in the brain of Mr Mill supposing them. My 'idea of the conditions of proof by experience' may not be 'very enlarged,' but Mr Mill is not likely to succeed in enlarging it by a fabrication of instances *outside of all possible experience,* and which, were it

fairly put to him, he could not but admit to be so.[1] If Mr Mill can only confute my argument as to experience, by the putting of cases which could never in experience occur, it seems plain that in seeking to confute, he has somewhat forcibly confirmed it. I must therefore continue to think that in here writing as he did—'If our 'so-called Consciousness of what we are able to do (of 'Freedom) *is not borne out by experience*, it is a delu-'sion,' Mr Mill exhibited some little misapprehension as to the relation of Experience to the matter in hand; making Freedom, as test of its truth, demand from experience a ratification, in the very nature of the case impossible, were Freedom thrice over assumed.

As a mere point of curiosity, it is perhaps worth a moment's consideration, to what extent the experience which Mr Mill considers possible of 'undeniable cases alike,' &c., supposing it not to confirm, would *invalidate* our alleged consciousness of Freedom. Of *two* alternatives we choose *one*. From the experience that we did choose *one*, there is plainly no inference whatever against our power to have chosen the *other*. No one will be so absurd as to allege in a man's choice of *one* of two alternatives, a contradiction by experience of

[1] I venture to presume Mr Mill would admit this, were it only on the evidence of such passages as the following:—'There is not one of 'the facts surrounding a human being, or of the events which happen 'to him, that does not influence in some mode or degree his subsequent 'mental history.' 'It is certain that our mental states, and our 'mental capacities and susceptibilities, are modified, either for a time 'or permanently, by everything which happens to us in life' (in which last the clause 'for a time' had better, I think, be extruded, on grounds sufficiently obvious).—*Logic*, vol. ii., chap. "Ethology."

his consciousness of a power to have chosen *either* of the two. And now, suppose an 'undeniable case', in which *all* the antecedents are exactly reproduced, and in which it is found that *again* this *one* alternative is chosen. Experience, which before told us that the man acted *so*, now tells us he has acted so *twice;* but it seems as far as before from telling us that he *could not have acted otherwise.* Supposing a man *free* to act *otherwise*, surely he might yet act *so*, and again and again so act. And as of two cases, so it might almost seem of two thousand—the two thousandth case of his acting *so*, would prove no more than the first perhaps, that he *could not have acted otherwise.* Experience would simply assure us that the man had acted in the one way two thousand times in succession. As the cases are plainly supposititious, and could never in experience emerge, it does not seem to matter a pinch of snuff whether I am right or wrong in this.

In a postscript to the little Essay which Mr Mill has honoured with some share of his attention, intended to correct somewhat of suspected crudity in my first statement of this particular point, I noted Mr Mill's averment that our so-called Consciousness of Freedom 'has 'no title to credence except as an interpretation of ex-'perience, and if it is a false interpretation, it must 'give way;' and I did not seek to deny, that if it was, as Mr Mill said, merely 'an interpretation of experience,' it ran some risk, as conflicting with Mr Mill's 'complete induction from experience.' But I asked of what special 'experience' it was that Mr Mill supposed

'it an interpretation;' and whether it was not wildly absurd to suppose that we should habitually 'interpret' our experience (the sole one possible for us) of having done *one* of two things, into a consciousness of being able to have done the *other*. Wild as seems the absurdity, I cannot but think, Mr Mill, who offers no explanation, is still fully committed to it. It might indeed be alleged, in reply, that I ignore the previous *deliberative* experience, of which probably it is—it might be said,—and not of the immediate experience of act, that Mr Mill considers our 'so-called consciousness,' a *mis-*'interpretation.' Two courses of conduct are before us, and we are in doubt which to choose. The mind oscillates between the two, considering now one, now the other; and feeling, whilst *each* is before it, an inclination to choose *it*, and a sense of *ability* to do so. Finally it chooses *one;* and recalling those items of the deliberative experience of which the *other* was the object, it illusively transfers them to the instant of act, and infers its ability at that instant to have actually chosen, not the one it *did* choose, but the other—infers, in a word, its Freedom. In this sense our consciousness of Freedom might, with some plausibility, be represented as an inference from, or interpretation of, experience—which, 'if shown to be false, must give way.' Had this been the ground occupied by Mr Mill, the further inquiry would necessarily have emerged, whether in the very experience interpreted there was not already involved the authentic consciousness of Freedom, said to be a merely erroneous 'inter-

pretation' of it? But, as against Mr Mill, it is happily not necessary to discuss this somewhat nice and obscure question; for of the saving suggestions above he cannot in the least have the benefit. The 'experience' he really means is quite too clearly indicated—'We never know 'that we are able to do a thing except from our having 'done it. We should not know that we are capable of 'action at all if we had never acted. Having acted, '*we know, as far as that experience reaches, how we are* '*able to act*,' &c.; and it seems positively to shut him up to the surely rather ludicrous notion that we 'interpret' our doing of *one* thing to mean, not that we really did *that* thing, but that we *could* have done—*another*.[1]

A little further on in this Note (p. 566), I admit correction at the hand of Mr Mill; and I am all the more bound to do so, that my falsely made point against him was precisely of a kind likely to be rather telling with the ruck of half-instructed readers—'It 'would hardly be worth while to notice a pretended 'inconsistency discovered by Mr Alexander between

[1] The account hypothetically here given of our conviction of Freedom, as merely a hallucinatory reminiscence of what takes place in the process of deliberation, is plainly that pointed at by Hume, when in 'Note F (*Essays*),' he says that 'the Will moves easily every way, 'and produces an image of itself (or a velleity, as it is called in the 'schools), even on that side, on which it did not settle.' The question, a somewhat nice one, as to whether or no the origination of our feeling of Freedom can be thus sufficiently accounted for, I have not to discuss with Mr Mill, by whom it is not mooted. Further on (p. 127), it will be found that I return to this point —which I do not remember to have seen investigated—offering simply so much remark on it as seems needful for the purpose in hand.

'what is here said and my recognition in a former work 'of a "practical feeling of Free-will," "a feeling of 'Moral Freedom we are conscious of," if Mr Alexander 'had not inferred from it that I "was at one time con-'scious" of what I now, for the convenience of my 'argument, deny to be a subject of consciousness. Mr 'Alexander himself quotes the words in which I spoke 'of this practical feeling of free-will as not one of 'free-will at all in a sense implying the theory, 'and took pains to describe what it really is.' The justice of Mr Mill's criticism here I quite frankly allow;—the more readily that, without aid from Mr Mill, I had already, on a reconsideration of the matter, detected the mistake I had fallen into. Dr Johnson, once upon a time, when questioned by a lady at a literary tea-party as to how he could possibly have been guilty of some trivial admitted error in his Dictionary, answered with brusque candour, 'Ignorance, madam, was the cause of it—gross and 'inexcusable ignorance.' I suppose I may as well emulate the Doctor, and simply admit here stupidity. My stupidity, I admit, was gross; and I have only this little excuse to offer for it. When Mr Mill, in the opening of his chapter on this subject in the *Logic*, spoke of the 'practical feeling of Free-will common to all mankind,' naturally, I humbly submit, though I grant very incompetently (the chapter being studied as a whole), I supposed him to mean the practical feeling in the matter, which really *is* 'common to all mankind;' and when he afterwards

spoke of 'the sense of moral Freedom we are conscious of,' I merely went on in my blunder, omitting to note sharply that this sense of moral Freedom was expressly by Mr Mill defined as no more than 'a feeling of being able to modify our character, *if we wish.*' But *this* is *not*, I maintain, 'the practical feeling of Free-will common to all mankind,' *Mr Mill himself included.* Mr Mill's own 'practical feeling of Freedom' is something considerably *more* than this. If—as with no great pains I hope to be able to do presently—I can distinctly show this, I shall not, indeed, have acquitted myself of misunderstanding Mr Mill; but, more or less, I may have made obvious how it was that, not altogether inexcusably perhaps (some admitted laxity in perusal allowed for), I came to so misunderstand him.

III.

NOTE—*page* 567.

WITH a certain deep end of my own, premising that, within the space of a minute, Mr Mill was to put his finger to one side of his nose or the other, I desired to be informed—apologising for the somewhat too homely nature of the instance—whether, having touched the left side of his nose, Mr Mill did not *feel* he could have willed to touch, and touched, its right side? This to more than one of my critics has seemed to be shocking irreverence. The coarse insinuation that Mr Mill has actually a nose, these critics have gravely resented as an insult to so profound a philosopher. Had I insinuated that Mr Mill was destitute of a nose, I could have better understood their objection. Mr Mill himself, in regard of my 'homely instance,' is less sensitive than some of his friends, and has nothing more savage to say of it than that it 'reminds him of the *asinus Buridani*.' 'Mr Alexander's *naïf* 'expectation that his opponent's answer will be differ-'ent, because of the futility of the example, reminds 'one of the *asinus Buridani*.' Seeing I purposely

constructed it somewhat on that model, I cannot be at all surprised at this. From Buridan's puzzle it differs but slightly; yet the two are not quite identical. Had I asserted that on Mr Mill's principles, in the absence of any assignable motive to determine him to touch one side of his nose rather than the other, he could not, when asked to do so, have touched his nose at all on either side, the identity would have been nearly complete. As it is, the similarity is sufficient to account for Mr Mill's being reminded of the more ancient example. In order to estimate the value of Mr Mill's subsequent rejoinder here, let me glance for an instant at the purpose with which I was led to invent so apparently 'futile' a case. I wished to try if by such a device it might be possible to get Mr Mill to give to a conspicuously plain question the plain answer, which he seemed resolute to avoid giving. The question before Mr Mill was the sufficiently simple one—doing *so*, don't you feel you had power to do *otherwise?* Have you, or have you *not*, a consciousness, so defined, of Freedom? This question, as I insisted, 'asks simply a *Yea* or a *Nay* on a candid self-interrogation,' and is not, except *evasively*, in any other terms to be answered. But no answer in these frank terms was, it seemed, to be had from Mr Mill. No answer *at all* to the question put to him, Have you or no such a consciousness? was in fact to be had from Mr Mill, who, instead of answering *this* question, kept answering the entirely different one—Can this con-

sciousness of Freedom alleged give good logical account of itself? He persisted, as I said, 'in answering the one question in terms suggested by the other;' asking as to his consciousness of Freedom, instead of the Yes or No desired, we received in reply 'a synopsis of Necessitarian argument.' As thus—'I am told,' writes Mr Mill, 'that if I elect to murder, I am conscious I 'could have elected to abstain. *But am I conscious* '*that I could have abstained, if my aversion to the* '*crime and my dread of its consequences had been* '*weaker than the temptation? If I elect to abstain,* '*in what sense am I conscious that I could have elected* '*to commit the crime? Only if I had desired to com-*' *mit it with a desire stronger than my horror of murder;* '*not with one less strong.*' Mr Mill is told he is conscious of so and so, and implicitly the question is put to him, *Is* it so, or is it *not?* The question thus put to him Mr Mill answers by putting *another* question, '*But* am I conscious,' &c. &c.? I take leave to say that, in a sense, this is exceedingly *Scotch* metaphysics, though I am confident no sample of the sort is to be met with either in Reid or Stewart. Mr Mill cannot surely suppose that, in putting this *other* question, he is answering the question put to him. If it be not essentially *another* question, where is the force of the *but* with which he must needs preface it? His deliverance, in point of fact, amounts to this—But really now, is this Freedom, about which you interrogate me, capable of being construed to thought, or reduced to a rational statement? Again—'I therefore dispute

'altogether that we are *conscious of being able to act* '*in opposition to the strongest present desire or aver-*'*sion.*' Mr Mill is welcome to dispute modes of consciousness which are not those asserted.[1] But surely nothing can be much more evident than that a man who, when asked, Acting *so*, don't you feel you could have acted *otherwise?* insists, as here and throughout, on rambling off into a consideration of temptations, desires, and aversions, their *relative strength*, and so on, has left the simple ground of feeling or consciousness to expatiate on that of *reason-*

[1] Our consciousness alleged of Freedom is practically, and surely quite intelligibly, defined, as a feeling that doing *so* we had yet a power to do *otherwise*. Freedom is thus *practically* and intelligibly defined a power to do otherwise than as we do. *Speculatively*, it is not intelligibly to be defined at all, the attempt at a speculative definition resulting in one or other of these forms of solecism—a power to act *without* a motive, to originate a 'motiveless volition,' or a power to act 'in opposition to the strongest motive,' involving the contradiction that the strongest motive is in point of fact *not* the strongest. But nobody ever yet, that I know of, asserted a *consciousness* of Freedom under either of these speculative forms of solecism; and until such a mode of consciousness is asserted, Mr Mill, in 'disputing' it, has the dispute entirely to himself. He is merely setting up a paltry puppet, the triumph involved in the bowling over of which, and carefully setting it up again once more to bowl it down, seems essentially a triumph of the poorest.

In vain would Mr Mill allege that 'to do otherwise than as we do,' and to 'act in opposition to the strongest motive,' are really the same thing. For—admitting it no otherwise to be conceived of—*how* did Mr Mill become aware of this? How but by a course of speculative inquiry, leading him to a theory of human action as in every case strictly determined by the balance of the desires and aversions. And into the question of 'practical feeling' or consciousness, to intrude his speculative theories, is to evade the question in its proper simplicity, and involve the whole matter in confusion.

ing. In aid of this vice of Mr Mill, who would plainly *never* answer the question put in the frank terms of *Yea* or *Nay*—which are really the only ones to be tolerated—so long as escape was possible for him into the region of motives, desires, and aversions, it occurred to me to frame an instance for him, from which the very ghost of anything to be called a rational *motive* seemed excluded; and, in hitting on the case suggested, of the two sides of his nose, I considered I had indifferently succeeded. Obvious accidents of disturbance excluded —which perhaps to specify minutely might subject me to a charge of further irreverence—it is impossible Mr Mill should seriously allege anything to be called a *motive,* for his touching the left side of his nose instead of the right, which equally solicits a preference. Motives are not here of course absent; but merely so rarefied, or attenuated, as utterly to elude appreciation and defy articulate statement. If I allowed myself to cherish 'expectation' that in *the absence of all motives and desires assignable,* Mr Mill might perhaps be beguiled into an answer, not hopelessly embarrassed like his previous ones, with considerations of *motive and desire,* irrelevant to the question put to him, and only pertinent to a wholly different one, that expectation is indeed proved by the result, a *naïf* and even stupid one. Mr Mill being asked,—having touched the left side of his nose, *does* he feel or does he *not,* he could have elected to touch the right side? and passionately entreated to answer so simple a question 'without 'bringing any of his logical great guns to bear upon it,'

thus answers, with what seems to me a very loud and full salvo of them—'I should, on the supposition which 'he makes, be aware (I will not say conscious) that I 'could have touched the right, had I so willed it; and 'aware that I could, or even should have so willed, *if* '*there had existed a sufficient inducement, not otherwise.* '*If any one's consciousness tells him that he could have* '*done so without an inducement, or in opposition to a* '*stronger inducement,* I venture to express my opinion, 'in words borrowed from Mr Alexander, that it is not 'his "veritable consciousness."' And now, may I simply ask of Mr Mill—the disturbances of course apart, at which I only timidly ventured to glance—what shadow of anything to be rationally called an *inducement*—either weak or strong—does *his* 'veritable 'consciousness' inform him of, for touching, in the case supposed, the side of his nose which he *did* touch, in preference to the *other?* Would Mr Mill be good enough to expound to us the *inducement?* If he cannot—and I believe him much too shrewd to commit himself to such an attempt—is it not sufficiently obvious, that Mr Mill here, in obstinately declining, as before, to answer the question put to him in the desired terms of *Yea* or *Nay;* and proceeding to discourse with philosophical gravity of *inducements* (of which the *only* account to be given is, that for his steady purpose of evasion, he must needs imply or assert them),—simply illustrates anew and more forcibly the confusion in which he persists in involving the subject? Having acted *so,* don't you *feel* you could have acted *otherwise?*

Yes or *No?* To this conspicuously plain question, it seems, a plain answer cannot be coaxed from Mr Mill, even if we concoct charms for him. Cart-ropes, perhaps, could not drag it out of him; and it may even be, that his philosophical constancy in the matter might emulate that of the martyr, and be proof against the 'torture of the boot,' if applied.

When a gentleman in the witness-box steadily declines to answer a plain question put to him; escapes upon an evasion; and on being desired by counsel to observe that it *is* an inadmissible evasion, simply repeats the evasion, when the question is anew put to him in a form purposely shaped to exclude it; the feeling in court is apt to be, that the witness is a little in a difficulty, and that the question is one to which it does not suit him to give a plain answer. If we similarly infer in the present case, that Mr Mill, in the matter of his feeling of Freedom, obstinately refuses the *Yea* or *Nay* desired and indeed implored of him, as the brief and only competent answer, simply because such an answer *sans phrase* would be inconvenient for him, we shall not be much out in the inference. His *true* feeling in the matter incidentally becomes obvious further on (p. 583), when, in defining the conditions under which 'exemption' from moral criminality must be accorded to acts, under other conditions held criminal, he says—'Yes, if he really "*could not help*" acting 'as he did—that is, if it did not depend on his will; if 'he was under physical constraint, or even if he was 'under the action of such a violent motive that no fear

'of punishment could have any effect; which, if cap-
'able of being ascertained, is a just ground of exemp-
'tion.' Certain of his actions excepted, therefore, on the ground that he 'could not help' them, all his other voluntary actions (the actions which 'depend on his 'Will'), Mr Mill unmistakably implies, it is in the power of the man to 'help.' Doing *so*, the man could yet have *helped* doing so, and done *otherwise*. To *this* Mr Mill is here fully committed, not merely as his practical feeling in the matter, but as positively his real belief. And this of a power in us to *help* doing as we do, or do otherwise, is the express definition of Freedom. Can the proof be more clear and explicit than it is in the light of this passage—from which, as now reissued with the stamp of his careful revision upon it, Mr Mill cannot possibly withdraw—that, as I pledged myself to show, Mr Mill, even whilst declining to admit in himself Hodge's practical feeling of Freedom, has it all the same, just as Hodge has? The reader, I may hope, sees now with sufficient clearness the *raison d'être* of Mr Mill's insuperable reluctance to give us a plain *Yes* or *No* to a question which can properly no otherwise be answered. Could he have been got to do so, to the question—doing *so*, is it or *not* your feeling, you could yet have *helped* doing so, or done *otherwise*?—he must inevitably have answered, I *could* 'have helped it,' I was free to do *otherwise*—such is my genuine feeling in the matter. And this feeling, I may observe *en passant*, amounts to something very different from 'the practical feeling of free-will

'common to all mankind,' defined by Mr Mill in the *Logic*, as no more than 'a feeling of being able to 'modify our character if *we wish*.'[1]

I don't the least intend, in any of the above remarks, to impeach Mr Mill's candour, or imply that he *consciously* shirks a question, as knowing it would be awkward for him to answer it. But that, in point of fact, he *does* shirk a question, which there is evidence he could not have candidly answered except as his opponents would wish him to do, seems simply a thing *proved*. For it is not to be supposed that Mr Mill, in writing, reconsidering, and rewriting 'Yes, if he really "could not *help*" acting as he did,' &c., was all the time ignorant of his own meaning, or innocent of meaning at all. Touching the slight alteration in the passage, made by Mr Mill in revision of it, something may hereafter be said. (See page 116, *et seq.*)

[1] As to this, "we can modify our character, *if we wish*" (or *will*, as Mr Mill elsewhere puts it), we shall, as we proceed, see what after all it amounts to (p. 94).

IV.

NOTE—*page* 575.

'MR ALEXANDER draws a woful picture of the pass which mankind would come to, if belief in so-called Necessity became general. All "our current moralities" would come to be regarded as "a form of superstition;" all "moral ideas as illusions," by which "it is plain we get rid of them as motives;" and consequently the internal sanctions of conscience would no longer exist. "The external sanctions "remain, but not quite as they were. That important "section of them which rests on the *moral* approval or dis- "approval of our fellow-men has of course evaporated;" and "in virtue of a deadly moral indifference," the remaining external sanctions "might come to be more languidly enforced than as now they are," and the progressive degradation would in a sufficient time "succeed in reproducing the real original gorilla." A formidable prospect; but Mr Alexander must not suppose that other people's feelings about the matters of the highest importance to them are bound up with a certain speculative dogma, and even a certain form of words, because, it seems, his are. As long as guilt is thoroughly regarded as an evil, it would be quite safe even to hold with Plato that it is the mental equivalent of bodily disease; people would be none the less anxious to avoid it in themselves and to cure it in others. Whatever else may

be an illusion, it is no illusion that some types of conduct and character are salutary, and others pernicious to the race and to each of its members; and there is no fear that mankind will not retain the property of their nature by which they prefer what is salutary to what is pernicious, and proclaim and act upon the preference. It is no illusion that human beings are objects of sympathy or of antipathy as they belong to the one type or to the other, and that the sympathies and antipathies excited in us by others react on ourselves. The qualities which each man feels to be odious in others, are odious, without illusion, in himself. The basis of Mr Alexander's gloomy prophecy thus fails him.'

The passage here criticised by Mr Mill was really no more than it professed itself; a mere 'swift confused outline not worth taking any great pains with' in the writing; and for all its bearing on the subject, Mr Mill needs scarce have been at pains to criticise it. Further, it was professedly the merest *fancy* sketch of '*tendencies*' calculated on 'a hypothesis to be regarded as practically an impossible one.' To criticise it from the ground of the *actual*, as Mr Mill here does, is therefore plainly illegitimate. 'The *basis* of Mr Alexander's 'gloomy prophecy thus fails him!' Of a prophecy, no more than a sportive flight of fancy, and, as such, announcing itself *based* on 'a practically impossible hypothesis,' where is the sense of such a criticism? In the very nature of the case, the basis of my prophecy, in Mr Mill's serious sense, fails me; but as I built on it only a very slight card-castle, as knowing it an 'impossible' basis, and distinctly admitting it such,

what becomes of the basis of Mr Mill's elaborate criticism? As a criticism it has plainly no meaning; as a demonstration of the impossibility of an admittedly 'impossible hypothesis,' it seems to have considerable merit, but might almost be considered superfluous. Moreover, such as it was, my sketch, in assuming a world of Necessitarians, assumed them as not only understanding their own doctrine, but as destitute of every feeling or impulse not *logically* to be brought into harmony with it; *not* as Necessitarians of Mr Mill's type, who so little understand their own doctrine, that, believing in Necessity or unconditional Causation, they don't in the least cease to believe with their opponents who advocate Freedom, that they 'could have helped' their every action; with all the results which may hold of this. And perhaps it might be shown, were it worth while, that in regard of the passage in question, and Mr Mill's deliverance upon it, this distinction is not one wholly without a difference; but clearly it could not be worth while, the very basis of Mr Mill's deliverance being, as we have seen it, erroneous. ' One or two random remarks may suffice.

That 'it would be quite *safe* to hold with Plato, that guilt is the mental equivalent of bodily disease' (almost as a matter of course Plato does not hold this; what he holds is, that guilt is an *analogue* of bodily disease, which is not exactly an *equivalent*[1]), I can scarcely concede to Mr Mill. On this ground, that plainly it

[1] His view is in no essential respect different from that set forth by Butler, in his three introductory Sermons. *He* also maintains that

would cease to be considered *guilt* in the understood sense of the term. The word *culpable* would cease to have a meaning, and we should no more *blame* a man for murdering his mother than for having an attack of typhus. We should not the less continue to 'thoroughly regard his act as an *evil*'—*imprimis*, from the point of view of sympathy with the poor old lady, probably foolish enough to love her own life a little; and further, as prospectively threatening ourselves, a little like the old lady enamoured of our own very foolish lives. But as *moral* evil, plainly we should not regard it; *moral* as distinct from *natural* evil, and as ground of blame or disapproval (*moral*, of course, for there are other forms of disapproval), would not any longer be recognised either in ourselves or others. The internal sanctions of *conscience* would clearly in this view be nowhere. Considering how indifferently we get on with the internal and external sanctions combined, I confess I should look upon our safety as more or less compromised were we left to depend for it solely on the latter. That 'we should still be anxious' (on obvious grounds I cannot go *quite* Mr Mill's length of '*not the less* anxious') 'to avoid it for ourselves,' &c. &c. &c. In all this Mr Mill, if he supposes he is fighting any one, is at least not fighting *me*. Inasmuch as he here says no more than I had myself said in writing, that even in default of the *moral* relations of

Virtue is, in a sense, the health, and Vice the disease, of the mind; and in point of fact all moralists, of whatever school, are, I should say, pretty much agreed as to this.

actions, 'relations to *utility* would remain, on which 'ground we might properly encourage the one class 'of persons, and discourage the other by hanging 'them as good riddance, and some hint of a warning 'to a public supposed amenable to motive,' I can *here* of course have no dispute with him. Whatever we make of morality, pleasure is pleasure, pain, pain; and on mere motives of fear and appetite, systematically worked to that end, Society, in some brutal and degraded form of it, might still perhaps contrive to exist. 'I might add, that even if his *groundless* an-'ticipations' (sportively set forth *as* groundless) 'came 'to pass in some other manner, and disinterested love 'of virtue and hatred of guilt faded away from the 'earth; though the human race, thus degenerated, 'would be little worth preserving, it would probably 'find the means of preserving itself notwithstanding.' Had Mr Mill, in doing me the compliment to read and reply to me (it is one which, in all seriousness, I appreciate), done me the further compliment of reading me with a little attention, he could not possibly have supposed that *here* he was joining issue with me. All this I can very well concede to Mr Mill, as having myself implied it, as we saw, in the work he is criticising; and in *one* further remark which he makes in relation to this topic, I frankly admit myself corrected. 'The external sanctions, instead of being more lan-'guidly, would probably be far more rigorously enforced 'than at present; far more rigorous penalties would be 'necessary, when there was less inward sentiment to

'aid them; and however destitute of pure virtuous 'feeling mankind might be, each of them would be far 'too well aware of the importance of other people's 'conduct to his own interest, not to exact those 'penalties without stint, and without any of the 'scruples which at present make conscientious men 'afraid of carrying repression too far.' It gives me pleasure to be *so* criticised. Could a *sic omnia* have been written over Mr Mill's remarks throughout, my pleasure might perhaps have been marred more or less, and any little *gaudia certaminis* I might have promised myself in running a tilt with Mr Mill must needs have come much to grief. What I said as to the 'external sanctions' being likely, on the disappearance of the 'internal' ones, to be 'more languidly' enforced, was, I believe, from my own point of view, correct enough, in as far as that there *would* be such a *tendency;* but I omitted to take into account the *per contra* suggested by Mr Mill, which is really, I think, of clearly preponderating importance. I admit that my 'woful picture' was, even as a *fancy* picture to this extent, plainly a faulty one. Mr Mill is not quite the philosophical good girl of a Fairy Tale very many of his admirers have supposed him. *All* his words are not necessarily pearls and rubies; but he cannot speak, even in Parliament, without dropping an occasional jewel, which might almost seem out of place there as distracting to nine in ten of the senators; and on no subject could he possibly write, at some point of which he would not sparkle, as here.

Fundamentally flawed, as we have seen it, this passage of Mr Mill has had somewhat more of my attention than it 'deserves,' or will quite 'repay.' Not the less on one significant clause of it I must further proceed to remark: 'A formidable prospect! But Mr Alex-'ander must not suppose that other people's feelings 'about the matters of the highest importance to them, 'are bound up with a certain speculative dogma, and 'even a certain form of words, because, it seems, his are.' Truth is *one*, as I understand the matter; and if my 'speculative dogma' conflicts with my 'practical feeling' on a matter of whatever importance to me, I must sacrifice the one or the other, considered as a guarantee of truth. If I hold to my 'speculative dogma,' I cannot *speculatively* regard the 'practical feeling' which conflicts with it as aught but, so to phrase it, a document of illusion. Mr Mill is, it seems, not embarrassed with any considerations of this kind. As speculative dogma, he asserts unconditional Causation as exclusive of human Freedom. He asserts, that is—if in the least he knows his own meaning—that no man can in anything *help* doing as he does. On the other hand, on what can only be the ground of practical feeling, we have just seen him assert—or *imply*, with a clearness equivalent to assertion—that every man—certain specified cases excepted—*can* help doing as he does; which amounts to an assertion—if again we suppose Mr Mill to know his own meaning—of Freedom. These are contradictory propositions, yet to both of them Mr Mill is clearly committed. From which of them is it, that on finding

the incongruity pressed upon him, Mr Mill would elect to retire? From the *last* it would be of course—to wit, that we can *help* our actions. And now, if we *cannot help* our actions, on what ground does Mr Mill continue to maintain that we are yet *morally* responsible for them? There is *no* ground on which he can do so; for we have it under his own hand—'Yes, if he really "*could not help*" acting as he did,' the man is not morally criminal, and *justly* the subject of punishment. Mr Mill's 'speculative dogma' is thus distinctly, on his own showing, seen to ground a direct negation of the moral accountability of man. That Mr Mill should think it competent for him at this point to reclaim,—'Oh! my feelings on matters of such high 'importance to me—my moral feelings—are not bound 'up, whatever yours may be, with any speculative 'dogma,' is simply a matter to be marvelled over. The sole question in dispute is, as to whether these feelings, the existence and supreme importance of which are not by any one denied, can, divorced from all power in us to *help* our actions, be shown to have a *rational basis*—it is a purely *speculative* question. That here, as elsewhere,[1] Mr Mill should think it of importance to

[1] 'That a person holding what is called the Necessitarian doctrine 'should on that account *feel* that it would be unjust to punish him 'for his wrong actions, seems to me the veriest of chimeras.'—*Mill on Hamilton.*

That Mr Mill's 'feelings about the matters of highest importance to him' are his feelings as to 'moral distinctions,' no one can possibly question, the sentence in the text being looked to, *apropos* of which his Note is introduced.

See further on this point as follows, p. 112-113.

allege, in regard of it, *the existence of the feelings themselves*, thus announcing an obstinate practical conviction or instinct as of weight against the opposed speculative conclusion, is really as gross a blunder as Dr Johnson's rough and ready refutation of Berkeley by kicking a stone with his foot, by Mr Mill himself elsewhere with scorn commented on. It is, in point of fact, precisely the *same* blunder transferred to the spiritual plane of thought. Mr Mill's scorn, like the curses of the Eastern proverb, had better 'go home to roost.'

V.

NOTE—*page* 579.

'How far Mr Alexander understands the first elements of the ethical theory he denounces, is shown by one of his arguments, which he is so fond of that he repeats it several times, that if the protection of society is a sufficient reason for hanging any one, it holds good for hanging an innocent person or a madman (p. 56, 57, 65, 89). He repeatedly says that this has just as deterring an effect as hanging a real criminal; being of opinion, apparently, that hanging a person who is not guilty gives people a motive to abstain from being guilty. As to the madman, he asks (p. 65)— "How should the state of mind of the maniac, as unamen- "able to motive, any way affect the efficacy of our hanging "him for murder, as a means to deter others from murder?" Mr Alexander really has no claim to be answered till he has got a step or two beyond this. Perhaps, however, he may be able to see, that all the deterring effect which hanging can produce on men who are amenable to motive, is produced by hanging men who are amenable to motive. Hanging, in addition, those who are not amenable to motive, adds nothing to the deterring effect, and is therefore a gratuitous brutality.'

In saying, in a sort of sub-sarcastic way, that I am so fond of an argument that I repeat it several times, the several pages being specified, Mr Mill is plainly of opinion he triumphantly refutes my argument. But surely in this there seems to be some logical fallacy, unworthy of so strict an intelligence. It is just possible I may have been fond of my argument, as finding it really a good one; precisely on which ground, Mr Mill, as at first sight disliking it (p. 56), might naturally be much disgusted to meet with it again and again (p. 57, 65, 89). It is precisely poor Jack's complaint against the boatswain who scores his back for him, that, having given him a cut with the cat, he proceeds to 'repeat it several times,' to the extent of two dozen or more, perhaps. That Mr Mill, though escaping more easily, has Jack Tar's reason to dislike my pestilent argument, and resent, as he does, the repetition of it, will presently perhaps appear, from his very small success in replying to it.

That I can anywhere be said to have *denounced* Mr Mill's Utilitarianism—further than as saying in effect, that at times it lay open to the suspicion of quietly assuming the ultimate moral basis, its need of which is by implication denied—is simply not to be alleged. For *Mr Mill's* Utilitarianism, as an 'ethical system,' I have really nothing but respect. His book on the subject, with the trifling limitation suggested, is an admirable little treatise, in its kind to be held a model. In holding that inductions of utility determine *what* shall be consecrated as *right*, and *what* censured

as *wrong*, I should be disposed to go nearly all lengths with Mr Mill; and as to the 'Immutable Morality' business, I regard it pretty much as a sort of reverend old Mummy, which it is necessary to unswathe from time to time, in the interest of Historical Science, but which is now as defunct as Pharaoh. In fact it was, I rather think, Mr Mill himself who conclusively slew the good old doting creature. Did ever any one seriously try to defend, as against his assault, the position of Messrs Whewell and Sedgwick? I do not in the least know; but should rather suppose not. Going along with Mr Mill so considerable a way as this, I only venture to part company with him in questioning, whether the primary moral conception or idea of *right* and *wrong*, under which, *as* right and wrong, the various things held right and wrong come thus to group themselves in contrast—and without which, as already existing in the mind, it seems plain that rightness and wrongness could of nothing whatever be predicated—can be come at by any manipulation of considerations merely utilitarian. This question—in which I do not profess to see my way with anything like perfect clearness, having only in the most cursory way considered of it—I happily need not here meddle with, as confessing myself much at a loss in regard of the matter in hand, to discern its relation to Mr Mill's 'ethical system,' and my assumed inability to understand it. It would be pity indeed for Mr Mill's ethical theories, which include so much that is valuable, if they had to

stand or fall with the reasonings wherewith he seems here disposed to identify them. It is presented as 'Mr 'Alexander's opinion that if the protection of society 'is a sufficient reason for hanging any one, it holds 'good for hanging an innocent person or a madman. 'He repeatedly says that this has just as deterring an 'effect as hanging a real criminal; *being of opinion,* '*apparently, that hanging a person who is not guilty* '*gives people a motive to abstain from being guilty.*' What I wrote was—hanging a person who is not guilty, '*the public presumed ignorant of the little deceit* '*practised upon it;*'[1] in which case, it may be hoped nothing in Mr Mill's 'ethical system' precludes him from clearly seeing that the effect upon the public would be precisely the same as if the *real* criminal had suffered. *This* clause I inserted for Mr Mill's special behoof, as remembering his criticism of M. Cousin on this very point (vide *Logic,* vol. ii. chap. "Fallacies of Observation");[2] but it seems I might have spared myself the trouble, Mr Mill being pleased, as we see, to

[1] *Mill and Carlyle,* p. 56—the *only* passage which to this subject has reference.

[2] Mr Mill's reasoning, as against M. Cousin, seems not quite so conclusive as might be wished; inasmuch as in correcting what he calls a 'fallacy of overlooking,' he himself proceeds to commit one. He a little overlooks the fact, that it could never be *as* innocent, but solely *as* guilty—though indeed erroneously supposed so—that an innocent man could be punished. As, however, Mr Mill could not fail to be entirely pleased with his own argument, I deemed it as well to evade it by inserting the clause as above—with such result as we see.

ignore it. Perhaps, now that his attention is called to it, he 'may be able to see' that the light insinuation of scorn in his 'being of opinion apparently' had, after all, as regards 'the innocent person,' and that *other* innocent person, myself, no very particular point in it. Such point as it really has, seems rather to threaten Mr Mill himself, than to look for me deadly. Were I in the least disposed—as emphatically I say I am *not*—to 'insinuate bad faith' in Mr Mill, might I not *here* do something more than 'insinuate' that Mr Mill's reading public has more or less reason to complain of 'a little deceit practised upon it'? But distinctly nothing of the kind would I permit myself to say or insinuate. All that I venture to say is—that it is a pity Mr Mill should either not have read this clause, or have forgotten it in writing his criticism.

With 'the madman' it does not seem to me that Mr Mill succeeds greatly better than we have seen him do with 'the innocent person.' Let us look a little at his dealings with him. 'As to the madman, Mr Alexander 'asks—"How should the state of mind of the maniac, '"as unamenable to motive, any way affect the efficacy '"of our hanging him for murder, as a means to deter '"others from murder?" Mr Alexander has really no 'claim to be answered, until he has got a step or two 'beyond this. Perhaps, however, he may be able to 'see that all the deterring effect which hanging can 'produce on men who are amenable to motive, is pro-'duced by hanging men who are amenable to motive.'

I shall never be able to see this; Mr Mill, at this point, among others, is somewhat too 'advanced' a thinker for me; and he must come 'a step or two' back, before agreement between us is possible. As regards 'deterring effect,' it will be evident, I believe, to every one who has not some argument or 'ethical system,' in the interest of which to deny it, that the hanging of a maniac for murder would be equally efficacious with that of a sane man; as not any whit less suggestive of the grim *tu quoque*, for Bill Sykes and his compeers, the soul of the deterrent influence. As to madness in its proper nature, amenability to motive, or unamenability, what know these thousands of unwashed blockheads, for whose moral edification such amiable spectacles are exhibited?[1] Absolutely no more than if they were all medical experts! What they *do* with sufficient sharpness know, however, is that the man has committed murder, and that before their very eyes he is being hanged for it. Strange, indeed, if this does not serve as a pretty impressive reminder of the further saving knowledge, otherwise vaguely conveyed to them, that if *they also* commit murder, they will also surely be hanged for it. What was previously an abstract proposition seems here translated into the concrete for them, in terms of rather formidable emphasis. And will Mr Mill, with full deliberation, assert that complete sanity in the

[1] They have now ceased to be exhibited; the more, as I think, the pity.

sufferer is essential in order that this should be the case; that the least little dash of insanity in him would suffice utterly to *preclude* the associations which would otherwise be formed in the mind between the *one* fact of murder, and the *other* fact of being hanged for it? Can it possibly be any part of Mr Mill's 'Association Philosophy' to assert such a thing as this? So far is Mr Mill's notion of non-effectiveness in the hanging of a madman from being the self-evident axiom he assumes it, that the very reverse might with some plausibility be argued. In as far as the fact of the madness was at all considered, it could not but suggest, even to these not very bright minds, more or less of mitigation in the offence; their natural sense would be sure to be, that, though indeed he had murdered his wife—who possibly deserved no less—the poor devil was being rather hardly used for it; and the inference, as obvious, would be nearly sure to occur, that if such is the rigour of the law, that, with the plea of madness in his favour, *he* is not allowed to escape, by so much the less, in the like case, will *they* be allowed to escape, for whom no such plea is to be offered. From this point of view it might even be urged, that as regards deterring effect, there is an element of impressiveness in the hanging of a maniac, not present in that of the sane man. Supposing a strong feeling in the spectators, that on the ground of insanity or another ground, the criminal *ought not* to be hanged; would it be

their sure or probable inference from the fact that, right or wrong, he *was* hanged, that they in the like case, *would not be?* Either Mr Mill supposes this, or he does *not*. If he *does* suppose it, he will not get any one to agree with him. If he does *not* suppose it, what has become of his argument?

In any case, it will scarcely, I should think, be pretended by Mr Mill, that our *sole* reason for not hanging maniacs, as we do sane men, is our scepticism as to whether our doing so,—as in the other case we assume,—would have tendency to deter others from the crime on the scaffold expiated. Yet this would be needed for his argument. In the sentence by Mr Mill cited, I was combating his *dictum* that 'the 'justice of punishment has nothing to do with the 'state of mind of the offender; *further than as this* '*may affect the efficacy of punishment as a means to its* '*end.*' In answer to *this* it was that I instanced the case of the maniac, whose 'state of mind' we *do* most carefully take account of, on a ground, as I ventured, and still venture, to surmise, of mere *justice* to the wretch not morally to be held criminal; and I said that as to the other ground of 'protection to society,' he would, equally well with a saner man, exemplify the terrors of the law. Mr Mill, in denying this, is also bound to deny that there is any *other* ground of our minute and extreme scrupulosity as to the sanity of capital criminals, than a doubt as to whether the hanging of the insane would have any deterring

efficacy. Mr Mill is perhaps capable of denying this, as he finds it essential to his argument, but scarcely, I should really hope, otherwise.[1]

[1] As to the sole other assignable ground—not in the above alluded to—on which the execution of a maniac might be held to have some tendency to defeat its object, as enlisting the sympathies of the public *against* the law and in favour of its victim, not thus *annulling*, indeed, yet possibly in some degree *disturbing*, the salutary associations between crime and its punishment—it was not here necessary to allude to it; inasmuch as Mr Mill is plainly *here* debarred from assigning it, the supposed public feeling in the matter being excited by nothing intelligible, save a sense of the brute *injustice* of hanging a man 'the state of whose mind' fatally determined him to crime.

VI.

NOTE—*page* 580.

'THE force of this argument[1] is attested by the straits to which my most persevering antagonist, Mr Alexander, is reduced by it.'

In reply to Mr Mill's argument here, I was certainly not *conscious*, at least, of being reduced to any particular strait; in truth, no passage in his whole Chapter seemed to me to admit of so easy and conclusive a confutation as this which he so much relies on. Let us see whether Mr Mill, in his rejoinder, be not himself reduced to some little strait of difficulty.

'Mr Alexander finds himself obliged to say, that "could we have positive assurance" in the case of such people, "that "their outrage of the obligation to respect life was solely an act "of self-sacrifice to what they considered a higher and more

[1] 'I ask any one who thinks that the justice of punishment is not 'sufficiently vindicated by its being for the protection of just rights, 'how he reconciles his sense of justice to the punishment of crimes 'committed in obedience to a perverted conscience? Ravaillac and 'Balthasar Gerard did not regard themselves as criminals, but as 'heroic martyrs. If they were justly put to death, the justice of 'punishment has nothing to do with the state of mind of the offender,

"sacred one," we should be obliged to admit that their doom "was not just in the particular instance." This is very well, but we want practice as well as theory. Would you hang them? Mr Alexander makes a halting half-admission that he would. "A dubious point of justice—dubious because the "true motive of the act must always remain obscure—may here "be allowed to be over-ridden by a plain and potent man-"date of expediency." Mr Alexander, therefore, would hang men, when it is doubtful whether they deserve it, would hang them for what "may really have been an act of sublime virtue." But what is the amount of real dubiousness in cases like these? Of all acts which a man can do, those by which he knowingly sacrifices his own life, sometimes with the addition of horrible torments, are the clearest from suspicion of all motives but honest ones. Mr Alexander talks of Brutus and Charlotte Corday; but I am content with Ravaillac. Is there the smallest reason to doubt that Ravaillac's "outrage of the obligation to respect life" was an "act of self-sacrifice," to what in his opinion was "a higher and more sacred one"? What motive had Ravaillac for his abominable action except a supposed duty to God, and did he not deem this his highest and most sacred duty? As for Mr Alexander's hint that such a man, if not culpable in the act, was "culpable in the perversion of his conscience which led to it," it is the old odious assumption of persecutors, that acts which they cannot show to have

'farther than this may affect the efficacy of punishment as a means 'to its end. It is impossible to assert the justice of punishment for 'crimes of fanaticism, on any other ground than its necessity for the 'attainment of a just end. If that is not a justification, there is no 'justification. All our imaginary justifications break down in their 'application to this case.'—*Mill on Hamilton*, p. 580.

been wicked in intention, must have originated in previous wickedness. The act of Ravaillac simply originated in false teaching, coming to him from the same quarter from which had come most of the good teaching which he had received through life. It came from the fountain of goodness, not of wickedness.'

It would in all cases be well that citations in inverted commas should be quite punctilious in accuracy, not only *verbally*, as given, but as giving the *whole* meaning of the author. Having said that, in the case of such heroic sinners for conscience' sake, without considering the doom awarded them *just* 'as '*deserved*, or due to their deed, considered in itself, and 'as an isolated act,' we should yet 'on obvious grounds of general expediency *acquiesce* in it,' I further said—'*justifiable*, we should call it in the general, not *just* 'in the particular instance;' and I proceeded to assign as the ground on which we should hold it justifiable, that 'such whimsical heroes were inconvenient, *inas-* '*much as no society could afford to grow a succession of* '*them*.' Had not Mr Mill, in quoting the clause, 'not '*just* in the particular instance,' seen fit to suppress the '*justifiable* in the general' which precedes it, with the previous statement of 'acquiescence,' he could scarce have represented as a 'halting half-admission' what is really as frank and explicit as it seems possible for words to make it; or desiderated 'practice as well as theory,' seeing he already had both. 'Would you hang them?' Certainly—I had already indicated,

on clear social grounds stated, which I should have thought to Mr Mill particularly pleasing and satisfactory. 'Would hang them for what may really have been an act of sublime virtue?' Certainly—again I answer; as before I had plainly implied. I would not balk the sublime virtue by defrauding it of its dues expected. Mr Mill a little seems to forget that solely by reason of its exercise under a positive certainty—or at least extreme risk—of being hanged for it, is the virtue at all a sublime one. I would permit it to be as sublime as Mr Calcraft could possibly make it.

Again—'But what is the amount of real dubious-'ness,' &c. &c. &c.? I should not have thought it possible that Mr Mill could so miss, as he has here done, the point of an opponent's argument. There is not, so far as we *know*, the smallest 'reason to doubt 'that Ravaillac's act was one, as it professed to be, of 'supposed duty to God.' But let us suppose a case. Suppose Ravaillac to have had a pretty wife, or—seeing he was a priest—let me rather say, a pretty mistress (it may be hoped that, in a Protestant country, this suggestion will be well received, as certifying the piety of the writer), and suppose the gallant Henry to have got his eye upon her. There seems not 'the smallest reason to doubt,' he would forthwith have proceeded to seduce her. Ravaillac would *then* have had a deadly private wrong to avenge; and, as to allege what Mr Mill would call the 'honest motive' would needs have involved some

compromise of professional character, he might very well have seen fit, on a point of *esprit de corps*, to compass his end under the mask of a public religious duty. Can Mr Mill fail to see that such cases might frequently occur; and that to accord immunity to acts of violence which could allege for themselves some lofty motive of conscience, would be simply to insure their frequency, and sap the very basis of society? Sheltered under the zeal for God, which would no doubt be loud upon their lips, men might without scruple proceed upon the devil's work, in the venting of their basest malignity. Hackston of Rathillet is a historical instance somewhat in point, who, having, on his own account, a quarrel with Archbishop Sharpe, when the old man was under the daggers, stood apart with his cloak devoutly drawn over his lips, lest the justice of the Lord being executed should take taint of his personal bitterness. But all men are not so scrupulous as the pious Hackston; on which ground—were there no other—it would be plainly preposterous, as merely a premium on crime, to make exception in favour of criminals for conscience' sake, so called. *Such* was my meaning when I spoke of 'a dubious point of justice—dubious, '*because the true motive of the act must always remain* '*obscure;*' and I should not have thought it could possibly need explanation, had it not been so totally missed by Mr Mill, in his 'clearest from suspicion of all motives but honest ones.' So totally has he missed my meaning here, that it is pretty plainly from my

speaking of 'a *dubious* point of justice,' that he has inferred in my mind *dubiety* as to whether I would hang such culprits, and out of what was clear and explicit, has coined for me his 'halting half-admission.' If he will once more glance at the passage, Mr Mill will see that the point of dubiety spoken of was one which suggests not the *hanging* of the culprit, but the *sparing* him; and probably not even in the interest of an argument or a pet theory, is Mr Mill prepared to maintain that to hang a man and to spare him are identical, or even reconcilable, propositions.

Again—'Mr Alexander talks of Brutus and Char-
'lotte Corday; but I am content with Ravaillac.' I also, for that matter, am content with Ravaillac; probably a heroic conscientious kind of creature, whom one regrets it should have been at once necessary and proper to extirpate; but on whom—as no doubt dying under the usual consoling convictions of the martyr, that in having his bowels plucked out and exhibited to him, he was becoming 'the seed of the Church,' and securing for his persecutors a very evil future indeed—it is not necessary to waste compassion. But really, what does this turn of Mr Mill's amount to? I am content with my own instances, and decline to consider those adduced in reply by my opponent! When I asked—'Was Charlotte Corday *justly* put to death, in 'the sense that she *deserved* her doom?' if Mr Mill condescended at all to take notice of me, he was surely bound to give me an answer. Provisionally, I had ventured to answer *for him* pretty confidently—'Mr

'Mill *will not say so.*' If Mr Mill *could* have repudiated the moral judgment thus attributed to him, is it not obvious he would have done so, seeing that if he *cannot* repudiate it he must admit his whole argument collapsed? Not being able to repudiate it—as I venture to surmise he was not—it was no doubt natural enough for him to say—Charlotte Corday! hum! ha! hum! I quite decline to consider her; if you please, 'I am content with Ravaillac;' but readers will perhaps agree with me in thinking this not a very cogent line of argument. Which of us seems the more 'reduced to straits' here, I leave it to others to determine.[1]

[1] Of all such cases as those here considered, Ravaillac, Balthasar Gerard, Brutus, Charlotte Corday, Orsini, *id genus omne*—what is to be said is that under the legal enactment the punishment of the crime is *justified*, the very existence of society being imperilled were such actions to be left unpunished. As to the actual *criminality* of the acts from the point of view of the operator, and the *justice* of the punishment, as *deserved*, there is positively nothing to be said with even a pretence to scientific accuracy. According to the theory we may form of his motives, Brutus was either the sublimest of patriots, or the most degraded of scoundrels (one's own easy notion is, that he was almost certainly a little of *both*). So of Charlotte Corday! a touching and heroic creature doubtless—with the sincerest detestation of Marat, and perhaps a little French rage for notoriety. How much of this last there may have been, would Mr Carlyle undertake to inform us? In brief, each of such cases must be separately adjudicated on by the moralist; and there is room for endless diversity of opinion as to whether the punishment might be *just*, in the sense of its being *deserved*. But that in every such case it is *justifiable* from the point of view of the legalist, and on larger social considerations, no one will be found to deny. Mr Mill's whole argument here proceeds on an identification of the legally and socially *justifiable* with the morally *just* or *deserved*: than which no two notions can be more distinctly discriminated. And throughout this whole section of his argument the same thing is to be noted. Should he wish, in the next edition

Further, it was—as before noted—in answer to Mr Mill's *dictum* in *this* passage, that 'the justice of punish-'ment has nothing to do with the state of mind of the 'offender,' &c., that I instanced the case of the maniac, whose 'state of mind' we *do* most carefully take account of. Mr Mill, in reply, is forced, as we have seen, to maintain that, by the punishment *under the law*, of a manaic for murder, sane men would not in the least impressively be reminded that all men, sane or insane, will be punished if they commit murder; that murder *will inevitably by law be punished.* It seems to me, in the light of what I have already said as to this, that the person maintaining so hopeless a proposition in order to defend his argument, is 'reduced' to rather desperate 'straits' in defending it.

One word as to another little point, though perhaps as merely personal, and no way of affecting the argument, it not very much deserves attention. 'As for 'Mr Alexander's hint that such a man, if not culpable 'in the act, was "culpable in the perversion of his con-'science that led to it," it is the old odious assump-

of his *Logic*, to further illustrate the 'Fallacy of Confusion,' which arises in the abuse of paronymous words, he could not do better than refer to this chapter of his own. It is a positive *mine* of such instances.

[As it seems not quite fair to throw out such a charge as that contained in the last sentence without some attempt at least to substantiate it, I quote from my previous essay a passage of some length, which seems pretty well to bear me out. It may also a very little serve to buttress and complete a discussion which, arising on isolated points, almost of necessity became more fragmentary than might be wished.—*Vide* Appendix, Note II.]

'tion of persecutors, that acts which they cannot show 'to have been wicked in intention, must have origi-'nated in previous wickedness.'

Mr Mill uses somewhat strong language here, and though it does not the least irk me, who am much of Benedick's mind as to such 'paper bullets of the brain,' yet as the imputation conveyed is precisely of the sort under which I should be least willing to lie, a word or two of explanation may not be amiss. When we speak of 'a perverted conscience,' we may mean, with Mr Mill here, a *mis-educated* conscience, the lapse of which 'originates in false teaching;' or we may mean a conscience *self*-perverted in the persistence of the evil will. This last it is, I think, which the phrase of itself most readily suggests. Of *this* I was thinking when I penned the clause to Mr Mill so odious; and Mr Mill will probably admit that, taken in this connection, it loses some little of its offensiveness. That thus interpreted, what I wrote—except in as far as we suppose that intervolution of the two modes of perversion, which is not an unfrequent phenomenon—has any clear pertinence to the cases which Mr Mill instantly proceeded to adduce, I do not of course assert. Mr Mill, without discrimination, having spoken of 'a perverted conscience,' I caught at the notion of perversion as it occurred to me, and did not stay to inquire curiously whether Mr Mill's instances of Ravaillac, and the like, fell precisely under that notion; neither, for anything it mattered in the argument, was it the least necessary I should. From defect of precise definition on either

side, Mr Mill and I have here been firing across one another. It is my hope that, on withdrawing my obnoxious clause as simply irrelevant to the discussion, I may cease, in the eyes of Mr Mill, to be the odious persecuting ruffian I should not wish him to continue to suppose me.

VII.

NOTE—*page* 582.

[*Original Note.*—'Several of Sir W. Hamilton's admissions are strong arguments against the alleged self-evident connection between free-will and accountability. We have found him affirming that a volition not determined by motives "would, if conceived, be conceived as morally worthless;" that "the free acts of an indifferent, are morally and "rationally as worthless as the preordained passions of a "determined will;" and that "it is impossible to see how "a cause, undetermined by any motive, can be a rational, "moral, and accountable cause." If all this be so, there can be no intuitive perception of a necessary connection between free-will and morality; it would appear, on the contrary, that we are naturally unable to recognise an act as moral, if it is, in the sense of the theory, free.']

[*Third Edition.*—'Mr Alexander (p. 80) actually thinks that in these passages Sir W. Hamilton is "asserting the determination of the will by motives;" and cannot believe that he intended "to assert an absolute commencement as "the mode under which freedom, though inconceivable, "has yet to be believed;" since this "would have been to "rush with his eyes open on the staring contradictory of a

"thing at once caused and uncaused." Yet presently after he himself charges Sir W. Hamilton's doctrine with requiring belief in two contrary inconceivables. In the present case, it only requires a belief in one of them, an absolute or uncaused commencement. Mr Alexander does not lay claim to much knowledge of Sir W. Hamilton; and certainly no one who understood what that philosopher, and most others who discuss this question, mean by "to determine" could fail to see that with him the determination of the will by motives means Determinism, or, as it is commonly called, Necessity.']

My knowledge of Hamilton's philosophy is, I confess, of the slightest; but before venturing to write on this subject, I took care to read, with what seemed to me sufficient attention, that very small portion of his writings in which it is expressly treated of; and I *do* 'actually think,'—strange as it may seem to Mr Mill,—that he does not, in asserting Freedom, *intend* to deny motives, or hold, as Mr Mill throughout makes him do, that 'volitions are emancipated from causation altogether' (Note, p. 554). From confusion and embarrassment, it is impossible, I fear, to relieve Hamilton's desultory Notes on this subject; but there is no difficulty whatever in fixing the doctrine at which he *aims*—which is one of 'conciliation,' involving belief in Freedom on the one hand, in Determinism, or Necessity[1] on the other. (What *else* than 'Determin-

[1] Can it be needful formally to explain, that by the word Necessity, as here used, no more is meant than Causation? Nobody is stupid enough to suggest belief at once in Freedom, and in Necessity defined

ism' Mr Mill can imagine I suppose Hamilton to mean by 'the determination of the will by motives,' I need not stay to inquire; Mr Mill certainly pays me no compliment in thinking that I 'fail to see' that determination means determination.)

At page 555 of Mr Mill's book, we find him writing —'The inconceivability of the Free-will doctrine is 'maintained by our author (Hamilton), not only on 'the general ground just stated (of its involving an 'absolute commencement), but on the further and '*special* ground that the *will is determined by motives.*' After this, it seems almost a little inconsistent in Mr Mill to represent Hamilton as *denying* motives. Not to insist on this—elsewhere, we find Hamilton writing —'Voluntary conation is a faculty which *can only* be 'determined to energy through *a pain or a pleasure*— 'through an estimate of the relative worth of objects.'[1] Through a pain or a pleasure; that is, by 'a desire or aversion,' Mr Mill's own definition of 'a motive.' Could Hamilton, had he desired, even with emphasis, to do it, have proclaimed more clearly than as here he does, 'the determination of the will by motives'? Mr Mill himself 'actually' quotes this—'So difficult 'is it to escape from this fact' (the suggestion of Neces-

as excluding it. *These* are contradictories. Freedom and Causation are admitted contraries, or irreconcilable opposites; they have never yet, that I know of, been shown to be contradictory.—(*Vide* p. 137 *et seq.*)

[1] Elsewhere: "Thus conation is not the feeling of pleasure and pain, but the power of overt activity *which pain and pleasure set in motion*" (as motives). It would be easy, but absurd, to multiply instances.

sity from 'our collective experience of life') 'that Sir 'W. Hamilton himself says'—as above. Let any one turn to the passage (*Lectures*, i. 188), and he will see that Hamilton is not wishing to *escape* from anything, but stating, with entire simplicity, a fact which it will presently appear he could not possibly intend to deny. Elsewhere, again, we find him writing—'Were we *even* 'to admit as *true* what we cannot think as *possible*, still 'the doctrine of a *motiveless volition* would be *only* cas- 'ualism; and the *free* acts of an indifferent, are *morally* 'and rationally as *worthless* as the preordained pas- 'sions of a determined will.' Does Mr Mill really suppose that Hamilton, in asserting Freedom, as an implication of man's moral nature, meant to *announce* the very doctrine, by himself thus expressly *denounced*, as 'only casualism,' and as such, *contradictory of that moral nature*, not less than the preordination of Necessity itself? 'Motiveless volitions' are here by Hamilton provisionally assumed, only to be *set aside as nugatory*. Is it reasonable, then, to suppose them included in his positive doctrine? That in point of fact they were *not* so, by *intention* at least, admits of the clearest proof.

Hamilton, in the 'Appendix' to his *Discussions*, furnishes us, on the subject of Causality (and Freedom), with some 'hints of an undeveloped Philosophy, which he is confident is founded on truth.' And this *confidence* he in great part attributes to his 'finding in this 'system a centre and conciliation for the most opposite 'of philosophical opinions.' What does Mr Mill sup-

pose the '*opposite* philosophical opinions' which Hamilton's doctrine, as it lives in his own mind, 'conciliates'? If the opposite opinions conciliated be not, on the one hand, Freedom as excluding Causation, on the other, Causation as involving a denial of Freedom, what, in Mill's notion, *are* the opinions which Hamilton intends to conciliate? Mr Mill's philosophical ingenuity is admitted great; but, unless it is greater than I take it to be, it will scarce avail him for an answer to this question. Further, we find Hamilton remarking—
'This scheme proves, moreover, that no difficulty
'emerges in Theology which had not previously
'emerged in Philosophy;' and instantly afterwards—
'Specially, in its doctrine of Causality, this philosophy
'brings us back from the aberrations of modern theo-
'logy to the truth and simplicity of the ancient Church.
'It is here shown to be as irrational as irreligious, on
'the ground of human understanding, to deny either,
'*on the one hand*, the foreknowledge, predestination,
'and free grace of God, as, *on the other*, the free-will of
'man; that we should *believe both, and both in unison*,
'though unable to comprehend either, even apart.'
And 'this conciliation,' he immediately after says, 'is
'of the things to be believed, not understood;' while further on we find him speak of 'the total inability of
'man to *conceive the union* of *what he should believe*
'*united*.' In the light of all this, the essential doctrine of Hamilton is not for one instant to be mistaken.
'No difficulty,' he says, 'emerges in Theology, which
'had not previously emerged in Philosophy.' The

difficulty involved in God's predestination and foreknowledge, as related to human Freedom, he regards as *identical* with that involved in Causation, in the same inscrutable relation. The two difficulties are, in his view of them, properly forms of the *same* difficulty. Now, the theological difficulty he adjusts by announcing of the two seeming irreconcilables, that we should believe *both*, and both in unison.' And the philosophical difficulty which he regards as the *same*, he cannot have meant to resolve *differently!* Consequently—and this becomes additionally clear in the light of the subsequent quotation from his favourite Jacobi—'The 'union of physical *Necessity* and moral *Freedom*, in one 'and the same being, is an absolutely incomprehensible 'fact; a miracle and mystery like to the creation'— it is not for an instant to be doubted, that the result in which Hamilton's mind rested was this—that Causes, or motives, on the one hand, human Freedom on the other, are alike to be admitted; that we 'must believe *both*, and both in unison;' and that 'this conciliation is of the things to be believed, not understood.' Moreover, when we find him writing in the 'fragments of a fuller discussion' appended in his final Note—'In fact, 'there is a curious conformity, if I may say so, between 'Newton's procedure and our own. Gravity is the 'great constitutive principle in the world of matter; 'whilst *Causation* is the highest constitutive and Caus-'ality the highest regulative principle in the *worlds both* '*of matter and mind*'— Causation throughout 'the world of *mind*' being thus as decisively recognised as

Gravity by Newton in the 'world of matter'—it becomes utterly impossible to maintain—as Mr Mill is unhappy enough to attempt doing throughout—that, in the interest of Freedom, Hamilton intends to *deny Causation.* That this result in which his mind plainly reposed—of two things to be believed in as reconcilable, though to reconcile them our reason is impotent—he could have reached by any manipulation of the argument, as he constructs it in the light of his 'Philosophy of the Conditioned,' with its two 'contradictory Incon-'ceivables, *one* of which must be true, whilst *both* can-'not,' may probably admit of doubt. Of the famous Hamiltonian 'Logic,' my knowledge is precisely *nil;* and likely, I fear, to remain so. That, by doing something or other with the Predicate, Sir William could have walked round the flank of this difficulty, I am perfectly willing to believe; but meantime I do not quite see it; it seems meantime a little like Freedom, and easier to be believed than understood. *Here,* perhaps, there *was* a little point to be made against Hamilton; but Mr Mill has not made it; and failing to make *this* point, it does not appear that he has made any other to speak of. (How *could* he, indeed, have made any, his reasonings, nearly throughout, being based on so vital a misconception?) Not improbably Mr Mill saw the point plainly enough; but likewise saw that he could not avail himself of it, and avail himself also of the *other* point, derived from 'motiveless volition,' and 'action for no reason in particular.' *One* of them he might have, but not *both;* and he chose the one which in-

volved a direct misrepresentation of what is unmistakably shown to have been Hamilton's real doctrine. Mr Mill's 'knowledge of Sir W. Hamilton,' as a mere matter of course, is almost infinitely greater than mine; but at this particular point it does not seem to show to advantage.

It is to be admitted, however, that in attributing to Hamilton's doctrine of Freedom 'the emancipation of the will from Causes,' Mr Mill is not wholly without excuse. When I wrote, 'Doubtless it is held by 'Hamilton, that Freedom, though *inconceivable*, as in-'volving the impossible notion of an "absolute com-'mencement," is yet as such to be believed; but it is 'only *as* an Inconceivable he claims our belief in it, 'not as an impossible "absolute commencement," as Mr 'Mill seems to suppose,' I considered I was justified in so doing, in the light of the context, as now adduced, which proves, as I think, beyond dispute, that he cannot possibly have *intended* to enunciate the doctrine by Mr Mill attributed to him. Rigorously interpret his deliverance, in the light of his 'Doctrine of the Conditioned,' and frankly, I admit, it lies exceedingly open to the interpretation by Mr Mill put upon it. I don't say that in representing Hamilton, as in the interest of Freedom, denying Causes, Mr Mill has *no case;* but I *do* say, that for Hamilton here, *as against him*, there is a case very much stronger; and I further say that Mr Mill ought to have known this, had his 'knowledge of Sir W. Hamilton' been so greatly superior to mine as I should myself have been disposed to expect it.

To conclude—let me cite a passage which, in the light of Hamilton's express announcement of his doctrine as a 'conciliation of opposite philosophical opinions,' seems to me pretty conclusive. Having remarked that *his* doctrine alone (as 'conciliatory' and recognising a truth on either side—this must needs be his meaning) affords 'a solution of the problem offered 'in the condition of *exact equilibrium*, in which the 'controversy has continued,' Hamilton proceeds—'*Previous* philosophers have held,' &c. 'Those philo-'sophers who embraced the alternative of Necessity 'virtually extenuated, as delusive, those ultimate data 'of intelligence, which attribute to man, as author or 'master of his actions, a moral agency, responsibility, 'liberty—an undetermined freedom to initiate action. 'Those philosophers, again, who embraced the alterna-'tive of Liberty, virtually extenuated as delusive, in so 'far as our volitions are concerned, that necessity of 'intelligence which constrains us to seek the com-'mencement of every event, external or internal, in 'some antecedent, itself determined by a higher ante-'cedent. The one class did not attempt to render com-'prehensible an infinite series of relative or determined 'commencements; the *other* class did not attempt to 'render comprehensible an absolute or undetermined 'initiative. *Both* implicitly charged reason,' &c.

Is it to be denied that Hamilton *here* means to discriminate himself from *both* these 'classes of previous 'philosophers,' 'extenuating as delusive,' neither, on the one hand, the ultimate data which guarantee

Freedom, nor, on the other, 'so far as our volitions are 'concerned,' that 'necessity of intelligence which con- 'strains us' to admit Causation; and to fix these 'oppo- 'site opinions' of Freedom and Necessity, by 'previous 'philosophers' held exclusive each of the other, as those in his own doctrine harmonised, or 'conciliated' in *belief*, though not in *intelligence?* It is not, I should say, even by Mr Mill to be denied. What then of Mr Mill's 'knowledge of Sir W. Hamilton,' in making him deny Causation? All that seems *here* to be said of it is, that one hopes it is greater *elsewhere*.

It is not uninstructive to note, that out of this very passage, which seems to seal Mr Mill's condemnation, he could perfectly well pick some sort of *quasi* justification of himself. Hamilton *does* here certainly *seem* to define Liberty as 'an *undetermined* freedom to initiate 'action,' 'an absolute or *undetermined* initiative,' but all he can intelligently be held to mean is, that it admits not of being construed to thought except as this form of *Inconceivable*. That under *this* form it is that he means to demand belief in it, cannot for an instant be maintained; for, almost in the same breath, he implies as 'undelusive' 'the Necessity of intelligence, 'which constrains us' to admit volitions *determined*. Volitions are at once determined and *un*determined, caused and *un*caused!! Are these staring contradictories 'the opposite philosophical opinions' of which Hamilton intends to announce, that 'we must believe '*both*, and both in unison'? It may be so; but *if* so,

he was one of the merest blockheads who ever put pen to paper; and it was surely unnecessary for Mr Mill to write a whole big book about him as the philosopher of all his school, 'the ablest, the most clear-sighted, and the most candid.' These are complimentary expressions, *one* at least of which, at this point, I must hesitate to apply to Mr Mill. Candid he is, I do believe, even when it might not quite appear; nobody ever questioned his superb intellectual ability; as to his 'clear-sightedness,' I should just here have thought rather more of it had he recognised as mere rash inadvertencies of expression and exposition—in what is professedly no more than a series of mere fragments tumbled out of a note-book—the things he has seen fit to represent, as conveying to us Hamilton's matured and deliberate doctrine.

Mr Mill says, that while declining to believe that Hamilton could mean to 'rush with his eyes open on 'the staring *contradictory* of a thing at once caused and 'uncaused,' I myself proceed to 'charge his doctrine with requiring belief in *contrary* inconceivables.'[1] In doing so, I charge it with nothing which he himself does not proclaim, in saying that it specially approves itself to him as 'conciliating the most *opposite* philosophical opinions.' These can positively be nothing but

[1] From this criticism it should seem that in Mr Mill's philosophical vocabulary, the words "contradictory" and "contrary" are identical or interchangeable terms. Some little distinction between them has, however, been surmised by other people.

Freedom as inconceivable, and Causation, which, in its infinite regress, it is his whim to likewise present as such; in other schemes held reciprocally destructive, in *his* 'conciliated, though this conciliation is of the 'things to be believed, not understood.' If *not* these, *what* are the 'opposite philosophical opinions' which, in his Doctrine of Causation and Freedom—sketched entirely in the rough—Hamilton proposes to conciliate? No answer on the general question can in the least be accepted from Mr Mill as valid which does not include an answer to *this* question; and this question Mr Mill will never be able to answer.

If these contraries, or opposites—in the sense that logically we are unable to reconcile them—'both of 'which and both in unison' are, as *result* of Hamilton's reasoning, to be 'believed,' might seem in some part of the *process* of it, to figure as the Contradictories of the Philosophy of the Conditioned, 'one of which must be true, while *both* cannot,' this, as I said, is a confusion on Hamilton's part, on which Mr Mill was entitled, if he chose, to animadvert, as on Hamilton's other confusions. What clearly he was *not* entitled to do was to falsify, for the sake of his points about 'motiveless volition' and 'action for no reason in particular,' the doctrine in which Hamilton's mind plainly rested, and which, beyond all question, he would have held himself bound to maintain.

Of the confusion—if it really be so, as to which I am by no means confident—in which Hamilton is here

involved, enough is perhaps said—the quite incondite and fragmentary character of his jottings on this subject being looked to—if we say as in the passage Mr Mill is here criticising, that 'his reconstruction of the argu-'ment in the light of his Philosophy of the Conditioned, 'has really done it no great service.' A man who has business in London gets into the wrong coach, and finds himself deposited at Exeter; what then? he next morning puts himself in the right one; he is in due time deposited in London, and claims that his conduct shall be interpreted throughout in the light of his manifest intention. So with Hamilton here—as to where he really means to go, there cannot be a shadow of doubt; as to whether he got into the right coach to take him there, in working from the 'Philosophy of the Conditioned,' there may reasonably be difference of opinion.

[My argument, as above, I am happy to be able to buttress—as against Mr Mill—by the authority of Professor Bain. In his Notes on the Mill *v.* Hamilton controversy (*vide* 'Mental and Moral Science,' p. 426) he says—"Both Hamilton and Mill are *agreed* upon the question at issue—namely, whether our volitions are emancipated from causation altogether." Professor Bain, therefore, does not so understand Hamilton, as, in the interest of the Freedom of the Will, to make him deny *Causation*. Mr Mill, however, throughout in his argument, does so. Mr Mill, though here in

essential agreement with Hamilton (as I agree with Professor Bain in thinking him), was, unhappily, quite unaware of it. Professor Bain, on the other hand, in noting the fundamental agreement between the two, seems to have lost sight of the superficial divergence which occurred in Mr Mill's misconception of his opponent's position.]

VIII.

NOTE—*page* 586.

'THIS vital truth in moral Psychology, that we can improve our character, *if we will*, is a great stumbling-block both to the "Inquirer" and Mr Alexander. They maintain that the fact makes no difference at all, and that the Causation of human actions is exactly the same thing with Modified Fatalism. Both he and *Mr Alexander protest vehemently, Mr Alexander at great length, that the Causation doctrine is as incompatible with Free-will as Fatalism is.* As if any one had denied that. In the very next paragraph, when arguing against Kant, I expressly affirmed it.'

Mr Mill, in one of his 'Notes,' says of Professor Mansel and the 'Inquirer,' 'that they could not have 'worse understood his argument if they had never 'read it.' Of Mr Mill I take the liberty to say the same thing *here.* Had I sought 'vehemently and at great length,' as Mr Mill alleges, to show that his 'Causation doctrine' is incompatible with the Freedom expressly denied in it, I must have been a blunderer indeed. The idea of my seeking, as Mr Mill's *opponent,* to prove to him 'vehemently and at great length'

the very thing, which throughout and with some vehemence, he *asserts*, seems really a little too ludicrous. To attribute the merest idiocy to one's adversary is an easy method of confuting him, and not—with Mr Mill—an unusual one. 'It is the main object of this 'paper to inquire in how far Mr Mill can *be held to* '*prosper in his attempt to harmonise our practical moral* '*instincts with his speculative tenet of Necessity.*' *Thus* it was, that my purpose was at starting defined; and on the whole, it was carried out pretty steadily, though not, as I speedily came to see, without a certain amount of blunder and misapprehension, which I am obliged to Mr Mill for overlooking. To identify Mr Mill's doctrine of Causation with Fatalism, not in the denial of Freedom—by both expressly denied—but in its bearing on the Moral Responsibility of man—in regard of which Mr Mill's distinction between the two doctrines seemed to me, and still seems, a distinction utterly illusory—was almost the *sole* object of my little Essay. What I *did* maintain 'vehemently and at some length,' was *not*—as Mr Mill here makes me do—that his 'Causation doctrine' is '*incompatible* with Free-will,' but that, as distinguished from Fatalism, in this particular regard, it is really in point of fact *identical* with it—a doctrine of Freedom[1]—*in dis-*

[1] Vide *Mill and Carlyle.*—'Observations these highly edifying 'doubtless, but as used by a Necessitarian, or unconditional Causation-'ist, conclusive of his mere bewilderment. Mr Mill, it seems, is not 'the Necessitarian he supposes himself, but *a wild advocate of Free-*'*dom*' (p. 102, 103). 'Again, as we before said, he is not the Neces-'sitarian he supposes himself, but *a frantic advocate of Freedom*'

guise. That Mr Mill's 'doctrine of Causation,' as distinct from a doctrine of Fate, is a miserable mongrel; neither philosophic fish nor flesh, and not in any thorough-going logical way a 'Doctrine of Causation' at all, rigorously prosecuted to its results! *This* is what I maintained, and shall meantime, for anything I see in his well-meant endeavours to make a convert of me, continue to maintain with quite undiminished confidence. Mr Mill's doctrine of Causation is somewhat like his Utilitarianism; and finding itself in a strait, never scruples to worm its way out, by a dexterous surreptitious implication of the opposite doctrine denied. Probably no thinker of Mr Mill's deserved eminence, of the same strictness and severity of intellect (in genuine, unaffected admiration of Mr Mill's consummate ability, in so far as I feel myself competent to estimate it—which is really but a little way —I will not yield to even his most ardent admirers), ever showed himself habitually such an adept, in what I take leave to call the art of intellectual *smuggling*. I have denounced as plainly *contraband* Mr Mill's 'Yes,

(p. 104). 'The candour of these admissions is admirable, but of 'course they come easy to Mr Mill, who is really, as we have seen— 'though without as yet being aware of it—himself *a very ardent* '*advocate of the Doctrine* (*of Freedom, to wit*) he thus celebrates' (p. 117, 118). And in such passages is indicated the main scope of the little treatise. What, then, am I to think of Mr Mill, in his making me 'maintain and protest vehemently,' that his doctrine is '*incompatible* with Free-will,' wherewith it is nearly throughout my express aim to *identify* it? Simply, that Mr Mill, in doing me the honour to criticise me, has omitted, somehow or other, to do me the preliminary honour of reading me—an operation commonly held essential in order to intelligent criticism.

'if he really "*could not help*" it—that is, if it did not 'depend upon his *will*:'[1] and I should really like to know how a man like Mr Mill could ever hope to pass through the Custom-house an article so distinctly prohibited as *this!* That Mr Mill, by *will* here explicitly to himself means Free-will, no one will of course assert. What might seem to be the state of the case is, that here, as elsewhere, he uses the word *will* quite vaguely and at random, not very distinctly meaning anything, but giving his argument the advantage

1 Is it really necessary, in any formal way, to elaborate a point so obvious, as that a consistent doctrine of Causation—of unconditional Causation—leaves to us no more power to *help* our actions, good, bad, or indifferent, than if we were simply so much brute matter, involved in the chain of physical sequences? A man is determined to act *so*; to suppose him to *help* his action, is to suppose a difference in the effect; and therein a difference in the cause or antecedent, involving a difference in the whole previous chain of antecedents. Mr Mill's distinct implication that—certain specified cases excepted, of physical constraint, &c.—we can *help* our actions, is thus in the plainest contradiction with his own doctrine, and a quiet assumption of Freedom, in an argument professedly Necessitarian. Here, from his *Logic*, is a passage precisely parallel—'Human actions are never (except in some 'cases of mania) ruled by any one motive with such absolute sway that 'there is no room for the influence of any other. The causes, there-'fore, on which action depends are never *uncontrollable*; and any 'given effect is only *necessary*, provided that the causes tending to 'produce it are not *controlled*.' Suppose that the causes tending to produce it are *not* in point of fact *controlled*; the effect is *then* produced, and according to Mr Mill himself, *necessarily* so (the reader will please to observe that the case, as thus put, includes every human thought, word, or deed, that can ever have taken place in the world). How, then, were the causes controllable? On what possible terms—from the point of view of the Causationist—not involving the intrusion of *other* causes, a whole world of changed antecedents, and consequents, and solution of the causal continuity?

of the associations with Freedom, which in most minds —including his own—obstinately continue to cling to it. If in stating his 'vital truth in moral Psychology, 'that we can improve our character, *if we will*,' he does not allow himself the same laxity and licence, nothing can be easier than to show that his formula is utterly worthless, as discriminating his doctrine from a Fatalistic one.

And first,[1] to glance in some casual way at what Mr Mill calls 'Modified Fatalism.' The modified Fatalist 'holds, that our actions are determined by our will, 'our will by our desires, and our desires by the joint 'influence of the *motives*[2] presented to us, and of our 'individual character; but that our character having 'been made for us, and not by us, we are *not respon-* '*sible for it, nor for the actions it leads to, and should* '*in vain attempt to alter them.*' Obviously, in this *tail* of the definition, so to speak, lies its main import. Elsewhere I have said of it that, as 'contingency clings to our conception of the future,' whether we

[1] Throughout more diffuse than I could have wished, I must *here* beg pardon of the reader for a diffuseness even greater than usual. The point at issue here—my former rapid remarks on which are flawed with serious error—is positively *central* to the whole discussion. As such, wishing to treat of it, as far as might be, exhaustively, I have chosen rather to be prolix than perfunctory.

[2] The word *motives* here Mr Mill uses inaccurately, as noted (p. 11). He means, of course, not "desires or aversions"—his own definition of motives (for he could hardly intend to say that "our *desires* are determined by the joint influence of the *desires*," &c.)—but the *objects* of desire and aversion presented to us—the "external motives," as he elsewhere inaccurately calls them.

believe in Free-will or in Fate—the thing which *will, or is to be*, being in either case, meantime, *for us* indeterminate—'should in vain *have attempted* to alter them,' might perhaps be the preferable way of putting it. Mr Mill will scarce allege, that in making so trivial an alteration as this, I 'break down a fundamental distinction,' or do more than merely simplify the statement by eliminating the element of contingency. This slight and surely inessential alteration supposed by Mr Mill acquiesced in, is not he, from the point of view of the Causationist, shut up to acquiescence in it otherwise, or as *belief?* Most obviously he is; for the man to have successfully 'attempted to alter,' would have been to have *helped* his action; to have interpolated a new, *arbitrary*, or uncaused effect, therein disrupting and confounding the whole chain of causal sequences. It does not seem quite easy for Mr Mill to escape from 'Modified Fatalism,' as in his own terms defined—unless, indeed, to say 'should in vain have attempted,' instead of 'should in vain attempt' be to 'break down a fundamental distinction.' Mr Mill is, not improbably, quite capable, at a pinch, of asserting this; and it is not to be doubted, that should he do so, he would find a great many acute people to agree with him. Wherefore, in case such a thing should occur, let us get back for an instant to Mr Mill's 'should in vain *attempt* to alter them.' It is certain—*what is to be, will be*—and this alike for the believer in Free-will and the Fatalist. As Causationist, but not Fatalist,

Mr Mill expressly holds that, were *all* the causes known to us, and were our intelligence competent to deal with the complex *process* of them, we could confidently *predict* the *will be* of a man's action—say a month hence—in any particular emergency; *as* confidently as we predict that a stone, if detached from its support, will fall to the earth. How reconcile Mr Mill's asserted power of *predicting* the man's action, with a power in the man to *alter* that action? Seems it not plain that, either Mr Mill cannot, in such a case, *predict*, or that there can be no power in the man to *alter* the thing which Mr Mill predicts? To successfully 'attempt to alter' would be to falsify Mr Mill's prediction. If Mr Mill, as Causationist and Prophet in the mood potential, be not a 'Modified Fatalist,' as defined in his own terms, there seems little doubt that, as accurate reasoner, he *ought* so to be. Professor Mansel, after all, then, was not quite so much out as Mr Mill would have had us suppose him, when, in answer to Mr Mill's 'no more than this '(assumed power of prediction) is contended for by 'any one but an Asiatic Fatalist,' he wrote—'and no 'more than this is needed to construct a system of 'Fatalism as rigid as any Asiatic can desire.'

That there may be no doubt whatever as regards Mr Mill's position assumed here, it may be well to refer—even at the risk of some redundancy—to the last sentence of the concluding paragraph of his chapter:—'Because something will certainly happen, if nothing 'is done to prevent it, they (the Fatalists) think it will

'certainly happen, whatever may be done to prevent 'it; in a word, they believe in *Necessity, in the only* '*proper meaning of the term*—an issue *unalterable* by 'human efforts or desires.' From *this*, the doctrine of Necessity *proper*, or Fate, is contradistinguished Mr Mill's 'ill-understood doctrine of *so-called* Necessity,' or 'true doctrine of Causation,' which includes, as of course we must suppose, a belief in issues *alterable* by human efforts and desires; and the distinction is announced a 'fundamental' one, which Professor Mansel is roundly rated for trying to 'break down.' We shall see, on a very little examination, that Mr Mill himself has broken down dreadfully in trying to set it up. Take any human issue in the *past*, certain 'human efforts and desires' concurred to produce, *caused* it. By *what* human efforts or desires does Mr Mill suppose it to have been by possibility *alterable?* Not surely by the efforts and desires which *caused* it! Mr Mill cannot mean to maintain *this!* He must needs intend an implication of *other* efforts and desires which in point of fact *did* not cause *it*, and *could* not cause anything else, seeing they did not exist; and if this implication be not to intrude *new* antecedents dependent on no *previous* antecedents, and into the 'true doctrine of Causation' to insinuate *free* origination, and the 'absolute commencement' of Hamilton, there has ceased to be virtue in Logic. Again, suppose the issue a *future* one! and future issues are, according to Mr Mill, so *certain*, that—the conditions supposed given us—we could with

absolute confidence *predict* them. Once more, by *what* 'efforts and desires' does Mr Mill think this *certain* issue *alterable?* By the efforts and desires which, as *cause* of the issue, we of course must foresee in foreseeing the issue? This can hardly be. By *other* 'efforts and desires,' then, which we do not foresee, for the admirable reason, that unless all sequence of Causation be annulled, we see them to be absurd and impossible? Mr Mill is positively bound to maintain *this last!!*

Could the proof be more clear, that between the doctrine of Fate, or *Necessity, in the only true meaning of the term,* and Mr Mill's 'ill-understood doctrine of *so-called* Necessity,' or priceless 'true doctrine of Causation,' there is no distinction whatever? Irrefragably, Mr Mill's 'doctrine of Causation,' in so far as it seeks to sever itself from a doctrine of Fate, or *Necessity is the only proper sense of the term,* becomes a *so-called* 'Doctrine of Causation,' or Doctrine of Freedom *in disguise.* Seems it not deplorably evident, that Mr Mill's 'ill-understood' doctrine of '*so-called* Necessity,' or Causation, is but poorly understood—by himself? No wonder it has puzzled other people a little! (Professor Cairnes, for instance—see Preface.)

To pass to the 'true doctrine of Causation,' as by Mr Mill himself *discriminated* from that of Fate, given in his statement already quoted! 'The true 'doctrine of the Causation of human actions main-'tains, in opposition to this, that not only our con-'duct, but our character, is in part amenable to our

'will; that we can, by employing the proper means, 'improve our character; and that if our character is 'such that while it remains what it is, it necessitates 'us to do wrong, it will be just (expedient?) to apply 'motives which will necessitate us to strive for its 'improvement, and so emancipate ourselves from the 'other necessity. In other words, we are under a 'moral obligation to seek the improvement of our 'moral character.'

The dictum—not denied, I believe, by any one—that 'we can by employing the proper means improve our character,' is now again before us as 'this vital 'truth in Moral Psychology that we can improve our 'character, *if we will.*' (I shall admit the italics significant, when I find it alleged by a philosopher of the opposite school, that we can improve our character, *if we won't.*) As such, it claims our very particular attention. And some *separate* attention must be given to Mr Mill's *other* dictum, that 'the character is (in part) amenable to the will.' (As the merest matter of course, on grounds elsewhere stated, the 'in part' may be dropt as of no importance.) Mr Mill is of course profoundly unaware, that these two dicta put forth by him *in the same sentence*, are in essential meaning *wide as the poles asunder.* Such, however, is the case; the first—Freedom of course denied—in no respect whatever distinguishing Mr Mill's doctrine from that of Fate; the other being a plain implication of that of Free-will denied. This I proceed to show.

And, first—as to Mr Mill's 'vital truth in Moral Psychology,' as, in relation to the moral problem, discriminating his Doctrine from one of 'Modified Fate.' That 'we can improve our character *if we will*,' is, I fancy, not denied by any one not also denying the equally important truth that *if we will*, we can *deteriorate* our character. But *how* this power possessed by us *through the will*, should any way alter the position, if over the *will itself*—as Mr Mill of course holds—we have *no* power, quite declines to become obvious. To have no power over the *will* by which only the character can be modified, is plainly, to *have no power to modify the character*. It is absurd to say that over the *end* we have power, all power over the *means* being denied us. Wherefore, unless by *will* here, Mr Mill—as indeed is usual with him—means *free* will without being aware of it, he will, I fear, be obliged to admit that we cannot modify our character; that however our character may be modified, it is *really* modified *for* us; that even whilst a man's character *seems* to be modified '*by* him, as one of the intermediate agents,'[1] it is, in the strictest sense,

[1] *Vide Logic.* "In the words of the sect (the Owenites), which in our own day has so perseveringly inculcated, and so perversely misunderstood this great doctrine" (the doctrine I am engaged in criticising), "his character is formed *for* him, and not *by* him; therefore his wishing that it had been formed differently is of no use; he has no power to alter it. But this is a grand error. He has, to a certain extent, a power to alter his character. Its being in the ultimate resort formed for him, is not inconsistent with its being, in part, formed *by* him as one of the intermediate agents," &c. A passage this, which is really in its way quite wonderful. I should suppose that,

modified *for* him, as merely the helpless instrument through which an alien energy transmits itself along the infinite procession of causes. The *moral personality* of man is plainly, from this point of view, abolished.

We are thus, in terms of the reasoning as above—which, as *not mine*,[1] I venture to suppose unanswerable—'not morally responsible for our character, or for the actions it leads to.' Varying the statement a little—for it amounts to no more—this is otherwise sufficiently obvious. We have abundantly seen, that Mr Mill, in implying that men can *help* their actions, does manifest outrage to his own professed doctrine, as Causationist. Given a particular action, Mr Mill —though perhaps reluctantly—must admit that as the inevitable outcome of his character, the man could not possibly *help* it. Is Mr Mill here capable of alleging—Oh! but he might have *improved* his character so as to be *able* to help it? Sincerely, one hopes not. For to improve or to deteriorate our character is simply to *act* in some such way as may induce these respective results. And as Mr Mill himself well says (criticising Kant, and as we see, in so doing, shearing his own legs away)—'There cannot be

if we are to think out a subject, it is "the ultimate resort" which chiefly, or even solely, concerns us. Further, in admitting the agency "intermediate"—*i.e.*, inevitably determined—like every other,—as merely the last link in the chain of causal sequence,—it is surprising Mr Mill should not have seen that he remained fixed fast as before in the bonds of a purely Fatalistic theory.

[1] David Hume—not I—is in point of fact responsible for it; see Note at close of the Discussion.—Appendix, Note III.

'one theory for one class of actions and another theory 'for another.' If the man 'could not *help*' his bad action, as birth of his evil character, as little could he possibly *help* the series of previous actions, by which that character was developed to evil, and not to good. Consequently, under Mr Mill's own—'Yes; if he really "could not help" acting as he did,' from which, as aforetime announced, and *now* with full deliberation repeated, he cannot with any grace retreat—the sinner is absolved from all moral responsibility, for his character alike and his actions.

I have thus *doubly* shown that Mr Mill's *one* dictum, 'we can improve our character if *we will*,' cannot, if conjoined with denial of Freedom, be rationally, in its moral bearings, distinguished from a doctrine of Fate. I proceed to show, and show *doubly* (if only to symmetrise the discussion), that his *other* dictum—'the character is amenable to the will,' is, except as an implication of the *Freedom* denied, a form of words to which we can attach no rational meaning whatever. 'The *Character* is amenable to the *Will!*' Yet, plainly, there can be nothing in the *Will* which was not previously in the *Character*. The Character is a product of the Will, the Will a product of the Character! Was there ever a more vicious circle? What are we really to make of Mr Mill's 'the character is amenable to the *will*,' and modified by it, coupled with its converse, even vehemently held to by Mr Mill, that the *will* is so wholly amenable to the character as to be its mere necessitated product? All that any one

will ever be able to make of it is an announcement of a self-modifying character. This, in effect, or *nothing*, is the doctrine to which Mr Mill is here committed. But how a self-modifying or self-determining *character* is any whit more explicable than the self-determining *will*, to which his objection is insuperable, or indeed, is at all to be distinguished from it, Mr Mill will find it not easy to explain. Oddly enough, Mr Mill acutely sees this point; and on the very opposite page presses it, as against Kant. What he lacks the acuteness to see is, that in applying the scythe to Kant he most effectually, as we saw a little ago, mows his own luckless legs off. (Readers sufficiently interested in the subject are referred to the book itself, where they will find this novel operation in surgery in the most masterly manner performed.)

Again—is the *man* one thing; the *will* of the man *another* thing; and the *character* of the man a *third* thing? Are not rather the three terms, however superficially discriminated, fundamentally in meaning identical? We speak of a *bad character* as meaning a bad man; and this with really greater philosophical accuracy than in saying that such an one *has* a bad character. A character is not something external to, and *possessed* by the man, like a sum of money in his breeches' pocket; it is the veritable *man himself*, regarded from the point of view of the Moralist. So likewise of the *Will*, which is not any kind of spiritual arm or leg, as it were, which the man makes *use* of as he does of these bodily members; but very literally

'the man willing' or operative in volitional act. *Vide* Hamilton—'The will is merely an abbreviated expression for the man willing.' That again, the character and the will, as each thus identified with the *man*, are really identical with each other, is sufficiently familiar to Mr Mill, who (see *Logic*) quotes with approval Novalis, to the effect that 'a *character* is a completely fashioned *will*.' This being so—and the very slightest reflection will show it can be no otherwise—the *man*, the *character* of the man, and the *will* of the man being merely three words, in essential meaning the same, what of Mr Mill's 'character amenable to the Will,' and modified by it? It is seen to be utterly without meaning, except as a man, will, or character, *self*-modifying, or otherwise—Free.[1]

[1] In addition to the difficulties really essential to it, this subject is constantly liable to be beset by others originating in the accumulation about it of terms almost inevitable to be made use of, but which yet are rationally superfluous. Such are *Will* and *Volition*, which are really no more than mere *words*, to which nothing in existence corresponds. Voluntary, as distinguished from *in*voluntary action, is simply action of which, as *motive*, we are *conscious*; and the *Will* can be nothing but the *man himself* operative in his conscious act. But so soon as, in current phrase, we begin to speak of the Will *of* the man—of the will as something which the man *has*—inevitably we are apt to forget this, and to lapse into grievous confusions. So also with *volition*, which—somewhat as Byron surmised that Junius was 'really, truly, *nobody at all*'—cannot be apprehended as *anything* distinct from the act, in which it appears—to use a strong metaphor—incarnate. Volition is no more than a *word* by which we have agreed to bridge over that chasm of unknown process, which intervenes between the man in the condition of desire or *motive*, and the man as he flashes into act. By the slightest attention, who will may convince himself that between the desire and the act there is no *intermediate mental state or act* corresponding to the term *volition*. The volition and the

Of the doctrines of Freedom and Fate, we have thus in Mr Mill's reasonings seen plenty; but of the *via media* announced as 'the true Doctrine of Causation,' as yet we have seen nothing. It has only been *heard of* from Mr Mill, an oracle addressing us hitherto from the awful cloud of confusion. Let us see whether from the one point of view which remains, this oracle can be interpreted in any such way as would suit its oracular pretensions? As I said—'to improve our character by employing the proper means' is simply to *act* in the particular manner fitted to produce that result—and so of deteriorating our character. What, then, does Mr Mill's 'we can improve our character *if we will*' really, after all, amount to? Simply to this tritest and most trivial of truisms—that if we effectively *will* a particular action, we can perform it. Thus, if I have the little misfortune to be a drunkard, there is chance I might 'improve my character' by staying

act are not, as Hamilton would have phrased it, 'numerically different.' Of the confusions not unlikely to arise in their being so considered, the following is a good instance (*Mill on Hamilton*)—'Direct 'power over my *volitions*, I am conscious of none. In common with 'one half of the psychological world, I am wholly ignorant of my 'possessing any such power.' Mr Mill (*System of Logic*)—'Their will has no *direct power* except over *their own actions*.' (If Mr Mill, to escape from a difficulty, is disposed to maintain that by '*their will*' here—the will of the men—he means anything different from the men themselves, as willing, it will be easy, on his saying what he means, to prove that he does not mean anything.) Thus, according to Mr Mill, he has power over his *actions*, but over the necessary intermediates or means, called *volitions*, he has *no* power. How ever could Mr Mill explain this except as a power of acting *without* volitions, yet *with* them, inasmuch as his acts are voluntary; of acting voluntarily at once and *in*voluntarily?

away from the public-house. Who questions that if I *will* to stay away from the public-house, I can stay away; or, unless he were a deep philosopher, would think of calling such a thing by so big a name as 'a Vital truth in moral Psychology'? Admitting it a vital and important truth, is it any whit more vital and important than its fellow, that, if I will to *go* to the public-house, I can go to it? Was ever such a mountain of philosophic intelligence, as Mr Mill is on all hands admitted, delivered of a mouse so ridiculous? Was ever so ridiculous a mouse, when its parent came to give it a *name*, thus monstered into something like an elephant? Mr Mill here reminds me of nothing so much as of a child blowing its bubble in the sun and entranced with its own performance. Lo you! the little orb ascends, glowing with prismatic radiance; do but prick it with the merest needle-point, and it descends in a drop of dirty water. 'We can improve our character *if we will*,' if we will, we can deteriorate our character; according as we may chance to will either way, we can go to the public-house or *not* go. So in the concrete interpreted, in this there is plainly nothing but 'the liberty as to which,' as Hume says, 'there can be no subject of dispute; if we *choose* to 'remain at rest, we may; if we *choose* to move, we also 'may'—what Hamilton calls 'the liberty of Spontaneity (to *Do* as we will), *a liberty which no Fatalist ever disallowed.*' *This*, which no Fatalist ever disallowed, or needs disallow, which nobody, in fact, would dream of disallowing, were he thrice over Fatalist, is what dis-

criminates Mr Mill's 'true doctrine of Causation' from the doctrine (obnoxious) of Fate!![1]

Mr Mill gives a slight sketch of the extremely intelligible *modus*, in which his 'moral Causationist, desiring to improve his character, may do it by the use of 'proper means;' and he contrasts with him the 'modified Fatalist,' who 'will not use these means, for he will not believe in their efficacy.'[2] He then winds up

[1] In the above I have simply expanded the criticism on Mr Mill at this point, indicated by Dr Travis in his interesting work, *Moral Freedom reconciled with Causation—by the Analysis of the Process of Self-Determination.* By Henry Travis, M.D. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1865.

'Mr Mill's *Logic*—"If we examine closely we shall find that this '"feeling of being able to modify our *character if we wish*, is itself '"the feeling of moral freedom which we are conscious of. A person '"feels morally free who feels that his habits or his temptations are '"not his masters, but he theirs; who, even in yielding to them, '"knows that he could resist,"' &c. But to be able to modify our character, without having power to determine our volitions, is only to have power to perform the *acts* which are requisite to produce the result; and this is only what is called freedom *to act*, to which the Necessitarian doctrine, *even in its less qualified form, is not opposed!* —(P. 36, 37.)

Dr Travis's book—as its title implies—professes to conciliate in Intelligence the 'opposite opinions' which, according to Hamilton, can only be conciliated in Belief. In my opinion, it quite fails to do so, almost as a matter of course. It is not the less an excellent and instructive work; and a reader must be very unusually well informed on the subject, who will not derive something from its close and careful preliminary *résumé* of the argument on both sides.

[2] 'Suppose that a person dislikes some part of his own character, 'and would be glad to change it. He cannot, as he well knows, 'change it by a mere act of volition. He must use the means which 'nature gives to ourselves, as she gives to our parents and teachers, of 'influencing our characters by appropriate circumstances. If he is a 'Modified Fatalist, *he will not use those means, for he will not believe*

—'I cannot suppose my critics capable of maintaining 'that such a difference as this between the two theories, 'is of no practical importance; and I must with all 'courtesy decline to recognise as entitled to any voice 'in the question, whoever is not able to seize a distinc- 'tion so broad and obvious.'

A Fatalist, as Mr Mill here defines him, is a person who 'disbelieves in the efficacy of means'—who, being a drunkard, says—'a drunkard I am fated to remain;[1] 'it is no matter, therefore, whether I stay away from 'the customary public-house, or go to it. Of course I 'can *at will* do either; but it really does not matter 'which I do; the result, as fated, must be the same!' This gentleman, supposed, is a Fatalist, and a fool to boot; what, in effect, he is capable of saying is, that

'*in their efficacy;* but will remain passively discontented with himself, 'or, what is worse, will learn to be contented, thinking that his 'character has been made for him, and that he cannot make it over 'again, *however willing.* If, on the contrary, he is a Moral Causa- 'tionist, he will know that the work is not finally and irrevocably 'done; that the improvement of his character is still possible by the 'proper means, the only condition being that he should desire what 'by the supposition, he does desire; consequently, if the desire is 'stronger than the means are disagreeable, he will set about doing 'that, which if done, will improve his character.'—(P. 586, 587.)

[1] Why suppose any one capable of this? If a man *is* a Fatalist and a drunkard, he must very well know that other people have been drunkards like himself, who yet afterwards became models of sobriety. *Their* character, at first determined *for* them to drunkenness, was afterwards determined *for* them to sobriety. In these cases—with no harm to Fatalistic Theory—'the work was not finally and irrevocably done.' Why must a man cease to be a Fatalist, and become what Mr Mill calls a Moral Causationist, in order to believe that possibly in *his* case also, 'the work is not finally and irrevocably done'?

he must remain a drunkard, whether or no he gives up his habit of drinking. A cessation from drink is the *mean* by which he may cease to be a drunkard; and of this mean he 'does not believe in the efficacy.' Mr Mill may call him a 'Modified Fatalist' if he will; I should prefer to call him, for my own part, a quite unmodified idiot. A man of this sort—his house being on fire about his ears—would say—'If I am fated to be 'burnt, I shall be burnt—I need not, therefore, take the 'trouble to walk out.' Except that, indeed, his procedure would indicate a certain 'belief in the efficacy of means,' he might as well at once plunge headlong into the flames; for, even if we suppose him to escape them, it is plain he could not long survive. Such a man would presently decline food, on the ground that, if he was fated to be starved to death, he *would* be so; and starved he would accordingly be. Fatalists of this particular type, are, I should imagine, *rare;* Mr Mill seems to indicate that he has known several specimens; I can only regret, for my own part, that I have not been equally fortunate.

There is, however, *another* type of Fatalist, with which I am more familiar; and it is a type, by Mr Mill himself glanced at in his closing paragraph already alluded to—'Before leaving the subject, it is 'worth while to remark, that not only the doctrine of 'Necessity' (as distinguished from the 'true doctrine 'of Causation,' belike), 'but Predestination in its 'coarsest form, if combined with a belief that God 'works according to general laws, which have to be

'learnt from experience, *has no tendency to make us act* '*in any respect otherwise than we should do, if we* '*thought our actions really contingent,*' &c. &c.

This kind of Fatalist 'believes in the efficacy of 'means'—employs them just as if he believed in Free-will; and believes, in so employing them, that *this also is Fate;* that the end (unknown) being fated, the employment of the means also is. And between a Fatalist of *this* kind, and Mr Mill, as Moral Causationist, *consistently developing his doctrine,* I confess I am 'able to seize no distinction.' Between Mr Mill's doctrine and that of the *other* fatalist, adduced by Mr Mill for his argumentative purpose of contrast, I *do* seize a distinction—that, namely, between a doctrine, as it exists in the mind of a narrow blockhead who sees only one corner of a subject, and *mis*-sees even that, and as it lives in the mind of a man of wide and piercing intelligence like Mr Mill, who sees, at least, *a good deal more of it.* And than *this*—the distinction between a doctrine, as held by a sage and an idiot, few distinctions are more 'broad and obvious,' or of greater 'practical importance.' If this distinction—important and obvious, yet not, I admit, 'fundamental'—be not 'broad' enough for Mr Mill, I must e'en submit, as I may, to be told that, 'with all courtesy, he declines to recognise 'me as entitled to any voice in the question.' What need I say in reply, except—with an emulous refinement of courtesy—that whether or no, I care not, as declining to recognise in Mr Mill on *this* subject, even a semblance of authority?

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To go on with Mr Mill's note—'Mr Alexander's 'curious dictum that a motive is itself an act, can only 'have a true meaning, or any meaning at all, if under- 'stood of this indirect influence of our voluntary acts 'over our mental dispositions. That a person can, by 'an act of will, either give to himself or take away from 'himself a desire or an aversion, I suppose even Mr 'Alexander will hardly affirm; but we can, by a course 'of self-culture, finally modify, to a greater or less 'extent, our desires or aversions; which is the doctrine 'of Moral Causation, as distinguished from Modified 'Fatalism.'

As regards Mr Mill's remark on what he calls 'Mr 'Alexander's curious dictum, that a motive is itself an '*act*,' nothing need really be said, except that, however Mr Mill might be pleased to consider it *curious*, it ought not at least to have been *novel* to him? A motive being defined in Mr Mill's unexceptionable terms as 'a desire or aversion,' the thing is as old as Epictetus, whom Mr Mill must surely have read—'*In nostra potestate* est opinio, *appetitio, desiderium*, '*aversatio*, et, ut uno complectar verbo, quælibet 'nostræ *actiones*.' It is also to be found in *another* writer, whom Mr Mill must be supposed to have read—though at odd times, as we have seen, there might almost seem reason to doubt of this—to wit, Sir W. Hamilton. 'We are unable to conceive an act of will 'as not an effect,—*i.e.*, as undetermined by a motive; 'and *if we identify, as we may, the motive with an 'anterior act of will*, we fall at once,' &c. Whether a

motive (defined as a *desire*) be with utmost accuracy to be called an *act*, who will may decide. I should rather suppose not: but that the mass of our desires complicate themselves with act, as in definite relation to the will, whereby, *to a certain extent*, they may be stimulated or controlled at pleasure, will not, I suppose, be denied by any one; and this was all that was needed to constitute my argument aimed at. Mr Mill is thus not very far from the mark, in saying that my 'curious dictum' 'can only have a true meaning, 'or any meaning at all, if understood of this indirect 'influence of our voluntary acts over our mental 'dispositions.' But does Mr Mill really suppose, that any *rational* Fatalist would think himself interested to deny such an influence? that by including in his own 'doctrine of Causation' this 'indirect 'influence of our voluntary acts over our mental dis-'positions,' he discriminates it from a doctrine of Fate? If so, he is a prey to the merest hallucination. A Fatalist, an intelligent Fatalist—I do not concern myself with the idiot, whom, under the title of Fatalist, Mr Mill erects into a philosopher—would admit, in the frankest way, what no rational creature denies—'the influence of voluntary acts over the dispositions;' but he would refer them to the *previous* dispositions, and maintain that dispositions and acts alike were involved in the circle of *Fate*. And, unless by once again airing his idiot upon us, as the only authentic Fatalist, Mr Mill, so far as I can see, would have no reply to offer.

As to Mr Mill's—'We can by a course of self-cul-

ture finally modify,' &c. &c., the answer to it is precisely identical. It will be plain, in the light of what I have already said, that no Fatalist needs seek to deny all this. A rational Fatalist may as frankly admit, or assert it, as Mr John Stuart Mill himself, who, as 'Moral Causationist' (whatever *that* may mean—and I profess that, after my very best study, I do not in the least know), considers it a *peculium*, or exclusive property, to him.

IX.

I HAVE now considered at every point important enough to call for special remark, the 'Notes' to Mr Mill's Chapter, in which he is good enough, by name, to recognise me. In addition to these, I observe, incorporated with his text, a paragraph of some length and elaboration, which is pretty plainly intended—though expressly I am not mentioned—to rebut certain strictures I had ventured to make on one of Mr Mill's arguments. Mr Mill (page 509, 1st ed.) being minded to maintain, that even on the extremest hypothesis of *Fate*, 'moral distinctions' would still continue to exist, not only as *recognised* (which is *one* thing) but as *real* (which is quite *another*, though Mr Mill seems throughout unaware of this) illustrated his position by supposing two distinct *breeds* of human creatures, destitute alike of Free-will, and irresistibly determined, respectively, by the very constitution of their nature, to the extremes of good and of evil. The distinctions between the actions of these two classes of creatures, according to Mr Mill, would not the less be *moral* distinctions. This I peremptorily denied; asserting that in such a case, the distinctions would be

mere distinctions of *utility*, simply *as such*; distinctions of good and evil indeed, in the sense of *benefit* and *injury*, yet not without plain absurdity, to be consecrated as distinctions of *moral* good and evil. In the passage which he now interpolates, a certain ground of justice in my criticism, Mr Mill seems candidly disposed to admit (p. 574, 3d ed.)

'An opponent may say,' he writes, 'that this is not 'a distinction between *moral* good and evil; and *I am* '*far from intending to beg the question against him.* 'But neither can he be permitted to beg the question '*by assuming that the distinction is not moral because it* '*does not imply Free-will.*' Now this, most distinctly I did *not* do; and to represent me as so doing (though I am not by name mentioned, there cannot, I suppose, be a doubt, that Mr Mill here refers to my remarks) is simply plain misstatement. Without hint of a reference to Free-will in the matter, it seemed sufficient for my purpose to observe, that Mr Mill's well-disposed *breed*, instead of being 'honoured as demigods,' according to Mr Mill's notion, would more probably be despised as idiots—amiable idiots indeed, or *innocents*, but not likely, as such, to become objects of devoted Hero-worship; that, on the other hand, his *evil*-disposed *breed* was by his own very definition of it, identified with the class of homicidal maniacs; and that unless maniacs were to be held moral agents, these creatures precisely identical could not be so held. And the sum of the matter was, that Mr Mill was not a little absurd in seeking to illustrate moral

distinctions by the actions of creatures thus shown to have no moral agency. Unless, indeed, Mr Mill might chance to hold (as perhaps in point of fact he does) that in order to moral action or agency, no moral agents are needed. At what precise point of my argument here, I 'assume that the distinction is not moral because it does not imply Free-will,' Mr Mill, if I do not greatly mistake, would find himself much puzzled to indicate.[1]

It is not a little amusing, that Mr Mill, having formally announced that he 'is far from intending to beg this question' against me, with an admirable philosophical composure, proceeds the very next instant, to *beg it*, over a whole page and a half:—

'The reality of moral distinctions, and the freedom 'of our volitions, are questions independent of one 'another. My position is, that a human being who 'loves, disinterestedly and consistently, his fellow-'creatures, and whatever tends to their good, who 'hates with a vigorous hatred what causes them evil, 'and whose actions correspond in character with those

[1] Had I anywhere in my argument implied that the moral distinction between a sane man and a maniac is, that the one has Free-will, the other not, Mr Mill might have had some colour for his statement. But I did not anywhere do this. Assuming, what every one admits, that a maniac—on whatever ground—is *not a moral agent*, I identified with maniacs Mr Mill's evil *breed* of human creatures, on no more abstruse consideration than this, that by the very definition of them, as Mr Mill himself allowed, or indeed asserted, they could only be 'regarded as noxious beasts' and treated accordingly. The question of Free-will at this point I left completely in abeyance; to have done otherwise would have been to be guilty as by Mr Mill libelled.

'feelings, is naturally, necessarily, and reasonably, an 'object to be loved, admired, sympathised with, and 'in all ways cherished and encouraged by mankind; 'while a person who has none of these qualities, or so 'little that his actions continually jar with the good 'of others, and that for purposes of his own he is 'ready to inflict on them a great amount of evil, is a 'natural and legitimate object of their fixed aversion, 'and of conduct conformable thereto; and this whether 'the will be free or not, and even independently of any 'theory of the difference between right and wrong; 'whether right means productive of happiness, and 'wrong productive of misery, or right and wrong are 'intrinsic qualities of the actions themselves, provided 'only we recognise that there is a difference, and that 'the difference is highly important. What I maintain 'is, that this is a sufficient distinction between moral 'good and evil; sufficient for the ends of society, and 'sufficient for the individual conscience—that we need 'no other distinction; that, if there be any other dis-'tinction we can dispense with it; and that supposing 'acts in themselves good or evil to be as uncondition-'ally determined from the beginning of things as if 'they were phenomena of dead matter, still if the 'determination from the beginning of things has been 'that they shall take place through my love of good, 'and hatred of evil, I am a proper object of esteem 'and affection; and if that they shall take place 'through my love of self and indifference to good, I 'am a fit object of aversion, which may rise to abhor-

'rence. And no competently informed person will 'deny that, as a matter of fact, those who have held 'this creed have had as strong a feeling, both emo- 'tional and practical, of moral distinctions, as any 'other people.'

In all this, I find nothing but steady dogmatic assertion, commended to the reader by Mr Mill's consummate mastery of clear and ingenious statement, the art of which in this case consists in heaping up about the subject a profusion of emotional terms,—'esteem, affection, aversion, admiration, abhorrence,' &c. &c. &c., beset with inevitable *moral* associations, Mr Mill's title to profit by which is the very matter in dispute. In *this* mode of begging a question, Mr Mill seldom indeed fails to exhibit himself an adept. To Mr Mill's dogmatic assertion here, a steady dogmatic counter-assertion, with a request that he will be good enough to *prove* that the aversion and abhorrence he speaks of could, on clear grounds of reason stated, substantiate themselves as *moral* aversion and abhorrence, seems the fit and sufficient answer; and if anything further were needed, the easy method of reply which sufficed for his first crude statement may very well suffice for this later one, which only differs from the first as somewhat more plausibly padded out. Let us suppose a man whose 'acts are unconditionally determined' to a particular extreme of evil, 'as if they were phenomena of dead matter,' and who rushes into homicide, let us say, by a chronic impulse of rage as irresistible as the law by which a stone

unattached inevitably falls to the ground. It would be interesting to know how Mr Mill would discriminate such a man from a homicidal maniac.[1] He cannot allege his use of reason; for, *ex hypothesi*, he has no such use of it as could avail him for avoidance of the crime; neither can he say, that whilst the maniac is not so, the man is 'amenable to motive;' for again, inasmuch as the motive could not *possibly* deter, the man was not really 'amenable' to it. Pending Mr Mill's demonstration of difference between them, I venture to assume the homicidal man, irresistibly determined to murder as stones are to fall to the earth,

[1] Perhaps Mr Mill had better not attempt to do so, as it does not seem likely he would succeed. *Vide* passage in his *Logic* before commented on (p. 83):—'Human actions are never (*except in some cases of mania*) ruled by any one motive with such absolute sway that there is no room for the influence of any other. The causes, therefore, on which action depends are never uncontrollable.' I have already remarked that this statement is really a Free-will one, as in manifest outrage of the doctrine of unconditional Causation. What seems *here* to be remarked is, that *maniacal* action is by Mr Mill expressly defined as 'ruled by one motive with such absolute sway, that there is no room for the influence of any other,' and *as* so ruled, 'uncontrollable.' Sane action, again, is action the causes of which are controllable; action *not* so ruled by a motive but that 'there is room for the influence of other motives.' But *this*, from Mill's point of view, I take leave to consider nonsense. How possibly, within the sphere of Causation, could there be *room* for any motives *other* than those causally efficient (in which, of course, we include those present, though—in a loose sense—*non*-efficient), by which the action was determined, and determined—except as we intrude these *other* motives—*uncontrollably?* If, as Mr Mill implies, this character of uncontrollableness, as being 'ruled by a motive leaving *room* for the influence of no other' be the sign of *insane* action, it seems plain, that for any consistent Causationist, *sane* action is in no respect to be distinguished from it, as equally partaking of this character.

as in every moral regard identical with the homicidal maniac. And what is true of this extreme case must of course equally be true in cases less extreme; for as Mr Mill has well told us, 'there cannot be one 'theory for one kind of voluntary actions, and another 'theory for another kind.' Consequently, for no bad action whatever, 'unconditionally determined as if it were a phenomenon of dead matter,' is a man more morally responsible than if he were urged to it by *maniacal* impulse! That this view, in which for our evil actions we are no more *blamable* than maniacs, is 'sufficient for the ends of society,' may in some sense be admitted; for the man, though not *morally* responsible, Society, for its own ends, may *make*, if it will, *responsible*, and hang him out of hand, or, failing that, shut him up. *How*, as Mr Mill alleges, it is also 'sufficient for the individual conscience,' self-approving or self-condemning, I meantime fail to discern.

As to the other kind of man, *all* whose actions are supposed 'from the beginning of things unconditionally determined to *good*, like phenomena of dead matter,' he might as well be a dead man at once, philanthropically set at work by a stimulus from galvanic batteries cunningly brought to bear upon him,[1] for any moral

[1] Let me utilise this suggestion a little. Suppose the resources of Science capable of such a thing—a corpse being furnished to us, by cunning applications of galvanism, we can so stimulate it that life is exactly simulated, and it goes about performing good and bad actions at the will of the scientific gentleman who works it from behind the scenes. Mr Mill would, I suppose, admit, that not the poor corpse-puppet, but the scientific operator, was to be blamed if it committed

quality, *rationally* to his actions attributable. In speaking of 'encouragement' to such a man, surely Mr Mill speaks idly; in regard of such a man utterly incapable of lapse, encouragement and temptation alike are seen to have no meaning. There could be no sense in encouraging him, except, perhaps, *pour encourager les autres* less happily and abnormally constituted. That he might be an object of *esteem*, I admit; but the esteem would, I apprehend, be of a negative, and not very vividly *moral* kind, like that which we accord to sheep, on the ground that they are good enough not to turn tigers upon us. To illustrate this matter in an easy way, let me suppose the advent of some wonderful billiard-player, who invariably, on taking up his cue, proceeded to make his game off the balls; under whose charming hand the balls, as if bewitched, perpetually either cannoned, or softly subsided in the pocket; who, let him try what hopeless stroke he would, was *never known to fail to score!* Certainly he would flutter a little, at first, the Volsces of the sporting circles; his

murder; to be praised if it carried a good Irish Bill through Parliament. And suppose that Science could go further, and bestowing life and consciousness, could now produce the very same actions, not directly, but through a medium of emotion generated—'love of good or love of self and indifference to good,' does Mr Mill really suppose the state of the case thus altered? Plainly it is not the least so; the scientific operator is still the *real agent*—the *apparent* agent merely his puppet, in regard of whom moral judgments can have clearly no manner of relevancy. And between such a galvanised puppet, and Mr Mill's supposed man, whose acts are 'unconditionally determined 'from the beginning of things as if they were phenomena of dead 'matter,' no moral distinction can ever possibly be substantiated. *Vide* as to this, Note on Hume.—(Appendix, Note III.)

skill would be reckoned a marvel. But suppose it came presently to be known that all this took place by a mysterious law of nature as constant as that of gravitation; that, let him play as wildly, aimlessly, recklessly as he would, the man was, under this strange law, absolutely *necessitated* to score. The man would still be recognised as a marvellous billiard-playing product of nature; but should we ever more hear tell of his *skill?* Pretty plainly, *not;* some lurking possibility of *failure* is essential to the very notion. One would not peril a serious argument on an analogy so off-hand as this; but it seems to me that in the *moral* sphere, the case is not essentially otherwise. There, also, some distinct possibility of *failure* is the necessary condition of any *merit*, to be rationally attributed to *success*. Easy indeed to throw *sixes* any number of times in succession, if you are allowed first to load your dice. A man such as Mr Mill here supposes, unconditionally determined in every case to good, as inevitably as a stone is to the ground, would be, so to speak, playing with dice which he had previously got loaded to suit him. No thanks to him for throwing his virtuous sixes any number of times successively. Not the less, should his sixes be from time to time thrown to me, in the form of £60 cheques, I should make it a point to regard him with some degree of 'esteem and affection.' Primarily, my esteem and affection would be directed rather to the cheques than the man, and only to the man as 'associated' with them; but *in time*—there is no saying—an '*inseparable* association' might be established;

and the affection which I had rationally entertained for his cheques, I might afterwards transfer to the man. I should no whit the *less*, in doing so, be a *merely hallucinated blockhead;* the man would no whit the *more*, in throwing his inevitable sixes, be proved to be *morally meritorious*. In having gradually come to so consider him, under the 'law of inseparable association,' I should simply have been befooled by that law; a misfortune from which so sagacious a person as Mr Mill has not always contrived to escape.[1]

As to Mr Mill's concluding sentence,—"And no competently informed person will deny, that, as a matter of fact, those who have held this creed, have had as strong a feeling, both emotional and practical, of moral distinctions, as any other people"—I should suppose that what he says in it may be quite true; were it not indeed, that, as believing he can *help* his actions, he is not the unconditional Causationist he thinks he is, Mr Mill himself, in virtue of the noble ethical fervour which glows in very much of his writing, might very well serve as an instance to illustrate his own position here. But what if it be to the full, as Mr Mill says? It is worthless for any purpose of his argument. Sup-

[1] I do not myself see that, from the point of view indicated, these arguments can well be answered. By changing the point of view, it might be quite possible to develop the paradox from them, that the more virtuous a man is, the *less* virtuous, in the sense of having *merit* attributed to him; the more vicious the *less* vicious, in the sense of being subject of *blame*. This would not, however, any whit invalidate the demonstration that on the Necessitarian hypothesis, merit, demerit, praise, blame, *desert*, &c., are words with no rational significance.

pose that up to the age of five-and-twenty, a man, without much troubling his head about them, has, in Butler's phrase, 'kept to his natural sense of things;' has never expressly cared to think of questions of Liberty or Necessity; and as to his moral convictions, has accepted them simply as they came to him, possibly with much earnestness. Somehow, he is led to think of this vexed matter, and—no shame to him on the ground of logic—is convinced by the crushing force of the Necessitarian argument. He accepts the doctrine of Necessity, and scouts the idea of Freedom; yet continues, just as before he did, to believe in Moral Responsibility or the reality of moral distinctions. This may very well be on several grounds. For it is just possible he may as little as Mr Mill, understand the doctrine he professes, and, scouting the idea of Freedom, may all the while firmly believe in it; or not *believing* in it, he may yet have a *feeling* or *instinct* of Freedom—a feeling that he can *help* doing as he does—which clings to him, and is unawares regulative of his feelings otherwise; or finally, his moral convictions being no less precious to him on the one hand, than his 'speculative dogma' on the other, in his determination to keep to *both*, he may have thought out the relations between them in a quite loose and irresolute way, and as trimmer between Freedom and Fate, have invented for himself some such *via media* of utterly illogical compromise as we have seen Mr Mill take up with in his 'Doctrine of Moral Causation.'

And, further, if we suppose that, as a bolder logician,

he has resolutely pressed the line of argument which leads him to admit such antagonism between the doctrine of Necessity and the moral nature of man, that holding, as he does to the first, he must logically reject the other; what is proved by the fact that his 'practical feeling' in the matter of moral distinctions remains precisely as it was? That the reasonings were *false* by which, *speculatively*, he was led to reject them? Surely, nay. All that seems really proved is, that a 'speculative dogma' accepted, has failed—as indeed we should expect—to extirpate a 'practical feeling,' founded on education, original instinct, or what you will, and worked into the very fibre of the mind by the associations of a whole quarter of a century. Does Mr Mill, of all men, need to be reminded that such rooted habits of feeling could only yield, *if at all*, with the utmost slowness, and as 'counter-associations might be formed'?[1] Of what importance then is it to allege the persistence of the practical feeling as opposed to the speculative conclusion? Here, once more, in effect, Mr Mill, emulous of Dr Johnson, despised as 'a man of much over-rated ability,'[2] is seen vigorously kicking a stone with his foot, and considering he triumphs over Berkeley. At this rate, people will begin to suspect that Dr Johnson is by no

[1] Is it necessary to note here that no counter-associations *could* in such case be formed, by comparison, of any potency?

[2] Somewhere in Mr Mill's *Logic*. I have not cared to overhaul the passage, the book not being at hand. [I have since sought to look up the passage, and have failed to find it. Possibly it may have disappeared from the later editions.]

means the *only* man of eminence whose abilities have been a little over-rated by the more ardent class of his admirers.

A few words as to only one other little point, and I dismiss this portion of the subject. In the little Essay which Mr Mill notices, I could not but comment with some sharpness on Mr Mill's unfortunate passage, which I must beg to be excused in once more quoting: 'Yes; if he really "*could not help*" acting as he 'did; that is, if it did not depend on his *will*, if he 'was under physical constraint, or even if he was under the action of such a violent motive that no 'fear of punishment could have any effect; which, if capable of being ascertained, is a just ground of 'exemption.' This passage is so plainly to Mr Mill, as Causationist, unpermitted, that it would have been wisdom for him, on finding it objected to on grounds not to be gainsaid,[1] simply to have dropped it from his book. It might then by a kindly critic have been condoned, as merely one of the little inadvertencies which the shrewdest thinker may at times lapse into in sounding his difficult way through intricacies of abstruse subject. As Mr Mill, however, has not only reproduced the passage, but, by making a slight alteration, has certified to us that his deliberate attention has been given to it, he has formally erected a cross, on which he now hangs a crucified impenitent, and from

[1] On grounds not to be gainsaid. So, at least, it seems to myself. For the reader, who may possibly adjudge otherwise, I quote the passage in the Appendix.—See Note IV.

which the good offices of all the kind critics in the world will scarce avail to take him down. Originally, the passage stood thus: 'If he really "could not help" 'acting as he did; that is, if his *Will* could not have 'helped it.' This he now changes into 'that is—if it did not *depend on his will;*' and this is, I suppose, one of the passages alluded to in his Preface, in which 'a slight modification in a sentence, or even in a phrase, 'which a person acquainted with the former editions 'might read without observing it, and of which, even 'if he observed it, he would most likely not perceive 'the purpose, has sometimes effaced many pages of 'hostile criticism.' By changing the turn of his phrase here, Mr Mill *does* succeed in evading the point of a page or two of light banter, to which I presumed to treat him, not perhaps in its flippancy of tone altogether to be held becoming, any more than certain occasional levities of the like kind which disfigure the present performance. Does he thus evade the point of the criticism—led up to by these little objectionable gaieties—that by *will* here he must needs mean nothing but that *Free*-will, 'in virtue of which only could a man in any case "have *helped*" his act, as Mr Mill here plainly implies that in most cases he could'? Plainly, he does not in the least evade it, his passage remaining as before, an implicit assertion of Freedom, expressly in his doctrine denied. Further—'if it did 'not depend on his will; if he was under the action 'of such a violent motive that no fear of punishment '*could* have any effect, which, if capable of being as-

'certained, is a just ground of exemption.' That in *every* case in which the fear of punishment *has* no effect, it *could* have had none, is, from the point of view of the Causationist, so entirely 'capable of being ascertained,' that any Causationist maintaining it *could* have had, is self-constituted *no* Causationist, but simply as to this matter, one of the bewildered of the earth, who does not the least know what he is. If the fear of punishment *had* no effect, it is plain it only *could* have had effect by being a *stronger* fear; and to suppose it so, is to suppose 'that change in 'the antecedents, which Mr Mill himself has taught 'us to exclude.' Consequently, in *every* case in which a deterring motive *has* no effect; that is, in every case of crime supposable, there is 'just ground of exemption.' From *this*—in my former criticism pressed upon Mr Mill, as logically involved in his deliverance here —is there anything in his new turn of phrase devised to 'efface hostile criticism,' in the least to facilitate his escape? I cannot, for my own part, see it so.

Furthermore—'if it did not depend on his *will;* if 'he was under the influence of such a violent motive, 'that no fear of punishment could have any effect;' that no counter-motive could avail against it! In *this*, Mr Mill may be held to have reached at last his *ne plus ultra* of absurdity. It amounts to a distinct announcement, that *no* action in which a strong motive overpowers a weaker one, 'depends on the *will*,' or is voluntary; that no actions are, in point of fact, voluntary, except, perhaps, those which are *in*voluntary.

Hideously disastrous for Mr Mill as his—'If his *will* could not have helped it,' was shown to be, it did not, on the face of it, involve him in anything so absolutely *dreadful* as this! Better for him to have frankly accepted and admitted my 'hostile criticism,' than thus have sought to 'efface' it by a 'modification of phrase,' by which, from one depth of absurdity he is plunged into yet a deeper one.

SUPPLEMENTARY.

WHATEVER be the force of the argument, merely logical, which, as proving the Causation of actions, is held to invalidate human Freedom—and it seems to me so altogether *crushing* that I am surprised any creature with 'discourse of reason at all should seek for an instant to evade it—it seems not the less likely that whilst the world lasts, and humanity remains as it is, said human Freedom will always have a good deal to say for itself. Some thousand years or so hence, when the John Stuart Mill of the period has triumphantly demonstrated it 'a figment,' and declined to admit it in consciousness, his critics will probably be able to prove to him from some passage inadvertently indicative of his true feeling in the matter, that—figment as he has cleverly shown it to be—he himself retains a thorough belief in it. That doing *so*, he could yet have *helped* doing so, or done otherwise, is, as we have seen, Mr Mill's assured conviction; and it is a conviction, I believe, which he will be found to share with every sane man, who, dismissing for the moment his theories,

will candidly tell us how he truly feels in the matter. If there be any man who feels otherwise, and is practically and clearly convinced he can in nothing *help* doing as he does, be it for good or evil, I should at least not advise him to allege his inability as an excuse before his fellow-men, of whatever may be amiss in his conduct; for it is certain it will not be listened to, or admitted, except for a maniac. But in point of fact, no man ever dreams of alleging in excuse of his voluntary actions the plea of inability to *help* them, which is admitted when the will is in abeyance to a clearly made out compulsion. And if a belief or conviction of which we are thus unable to get rid, even when we have reasoned it away, be not, on the *expellas furca recurret* principle, to be accepted, as a genuine belief *naturæ*,[1] or datum of human consciousness, I know not where we should look for such.

There seemed always considerable force in Clarke's way of putting it, that 'all our actions do now in experience *seem* to us to be *free*, exactly in the same manner, as they *would do*, upon supposition of our being really Free Agents,'—that in fact—freedom assumed—the evidence of consciousness in its favour,

[1] Our belief in the external world, it may be urged, is precisely in the same sense, a Natural belief; we cannot get rid of it, even when we have reasoned it away. Yet Mr Mill not only regards it as illusory, but is ready with his 'Psychological Theory,' which constructs the Illusion as such, out of primary elements of experience. And if out of elements of experience he can similarly educe the idea of Freedom, it is admitted he will do something to discredit it as an article of Natural Belief. Of this hereafter (see p. 124-128).

could by no possibility have been stronger than it now is, in the very minds—as instance that of Mr Mill—by which it is most strenuously denied. He very well goes on to say that 'this does not indeed amount to a 'strict Demonstration of our being free;' and if he had said it did not amount to any demonstration at all, strict or unstrict, perhaps his own strictness would have been greater. What follows is in some sense remarkable enough—seeing how perseveringly the plea put forth in it, as fundamental to his whole Philosophy, was afterwards urged by Hamilton—to deserve quotation in an argument originating in Mr Mill's consideration of his claims. It is not, he admits, a Demonstration; 'yet it leaves on the other side of the ques-'tion nothing but a bare Possibility of our *being so* '*framed by the author of Nature, as to be unavoidably* '*deceived in this matter by every Experience of every* '*action we perform.*' There is nothing, however, here to which a determined and thorough-going antagonist needs find any difficulty in replying. The bare possibility by Clarke admitted, is strictly all that is needed by the sceptic, as ground of his negative reasonings; and to what Mr Mill calls Hamilton's 'tiresome plea' here anticipated by Clarke[1]—'is then the root of our Nature a lie? the Deity therein a deceiver?'—he may answer, with entire composure, that perhaps it is really *so;* that he sees no very good reason, *why not,* and will be glad if from his own clear personal knowledge

[1] And Clarke, in his turn, is somewhere anticipated by Descartes unless my memory deceives me.

of the Deity, his opponent will be good enough to furnish him with one. To a gentleman prepared, as he ought to be, from his point of view of the Sceptic, to quite coolly go this length, it will not be easy to reply.[1] He is perfectly willing to admit Freedom as given in consciousness; but denies that its being so given is any guarantee of its reality. And if nowhere else he asserts such a guarantee; and not in the least staggered at being told that Science itself is thus reduced to incertitude, announces that for aught we can ever know, the whole world and life of man is simply a 'shadow-system' of cunningly-devised illusions, his position seems pretty impregnable.

Mr Mill, however, does not go quite this length, admitting throughout in consciousness, supposed genuine, a basis of reality and certitude. And it is alleged that for the fact of Freedom,—admitted on the ground of logic inexplicable—we *have* this indefeasible guarantee of *consciousness*. This Mr Mill, it is plain, in the most resolute manner would deny, even whilst admitting—as in fact, when the

[1] In order to get at the Deity by way of proof or otherwise, the veracity of Consciousness and Reason must be assumed. How then can we legitimately make use of the Deity to prove the veracity of Consciousness? *Vide* Mr Mill (p. 161-163). *Vide*, as to this, Hume—"Essay on the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy:" "To have recourse to the Supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit. If His veracity were at all concerned in this matter, our senses would be entirely infallible, because it is not possible He can ever deceive. Not to mention, that, if the external world be once called in question, we shall be at a loss to find arguments by which we may prove the existence of that Being, or any of His attributes."

thing is pressed upon him (as at p. 35), he cannot possibly help doing—that of Freedom, he has, like Hodge and others, a practical feeling or conviction. I am 'convinced'—he would say—or 'aware—I will not say *conscious*' (see *ante*, p. 33), having, it seems, a faculty peculiar to himself, of being most sharply convinced, and aware of things, yet all the while profoundly unconscious of them. In effect, he would be sure to say that, admitting Freedom—as he *must* and *does*—in what I may call *developed* consciousness, that 'familiar and intimate knowledge[1] concerning ourselves which there is no appropriate scientific name 'for' (p. 566, 3d ed.), he denies it in the *primitive* consciousness, to which only he attributes scientific validity. But, this position assumed, Mr Mill is bound to exhibit the process, whereby, no germ of it being given in *primitive* consciousness, the feeling of Freedom becomes 'developed,' as we afterwards find it in the *mature* consciousness which, in order to meet Mr Mill, I am willing to call 'conviction.' And, in any attempt to exhibit this process, Mr Mill's failure would almost certainly be signal. Mr Mill's grand test of a *datum* of primitive consciousness—for him an extremely convenient one—is, that it should be shown to be present in the mind of an infant at the instant of birth. No more than of anything else, can

[1] If we are to be very strict with Mr Mill, it may be noted that in using the word *knowledge* here he really gives up his case; knowledge—in so far as it really is so—involving the reality of the thing known; whilst from *belief*, on the other hand, there is no inference whatever of the reality of the thing believed.

this be demonstrated of Freedom.[1] And in fact, I have elsewhere noted it of children, as 'not a little 'curious that the earliest utterances of these small 'philosophers are in favour of Mr Mill's doctrine of 'Necessity.' In the fact familiar to every one in the least familiar with children, that constantly — and

[1] And supposing it *could* be demonstrated—a miraculous babe being got whose consciousness, at the instant of birth, was found, on its being catechised, to include Freedom, or anything else obnoxious to Mr Mill's theories? We should just be where we were. Mr Mill is too clever a general, in taking up a position, not to carefully secure his line of retreat. Does any one doubt that in such a case as that supposed, Mr Mill would for an instant hesitate to *remand us to the mother's womb*, and to some supposed round of *ante-natal* experiences, which, with a little help from Association and so on, would perfectly well serve his turn? Of course we could not follow Mr Mill *there!* Psychology, as conceived by Mr Mill, is certainly a pursuit of Knowledge under difficulties. This seems but idle fleering, and yet is not wholly so. The child before birth would be quite as legitimate an ally in argument for Mr Mill, as the child at the instant of it; and not any whit more ludicrous. In all this of Mr Mill about the consciousness of an infant at the instant of birth, if we could get at it, being decisive, as *pure*, in distinction from subsequent consciousness which includes elements of experience, there seems nothing but misconception. Mr Mill, as we shall see (p. 154), does not seem to be aware of a fact so simple as this, that Consciousness and Experience are, in point of fact, convertible terms, Experience being only possible through Consciousness, and the first fact of Consciousness being also the first of Experience. He seems also at times to forget, what of course he must very well know, that in order to Experience there must first be a creature to *have* it, by whose outfit of connate *capacities*, as in ordered sequence developed, the character and content of the Experience are rigorously throughout determined. Not unfrequently, as the vowed Apostle of Experience, the divine Original of everything, Mr Mill almost seems to write, as if given the Experience called Vision, he could create from it the seeing Eye. But surely to begin with the Eye and thence proceed to the Vision seems much the more natural order.

this in obvious passionate *bona fides*—for acts which are plainly voluntary, they will allege in excuse the 'I could not help it,' which in later life nobody would dream of alleging unless wishing to be held a maniac, I have said that 'the force and obviousness of the 'argument, derived from the experienced sequences 'of impulse and act, receives perhaps the strongest 'illustration of which it seems capable.' The question before Mr Mill is this—*how* comes it that the child, at this stage an orthodox Causationist Philosopher—rather more so than we have seen Mr Mill himself—is afterwards debauched into the heresy of believing itself *free*, and able to *help* its actions? It does not seem much to attest the conclusiveness of Mr Mill's 'Experience argument,'—the total facts being taken—that satisfying the infant in coats, it is despised and rejected by the boy who has intelligently progressed into knickerbockers. *Whence* this dissatisfaction of the boy with the wisdom of Mr Mill, which perfectly sufficed him as an infant? Mr Mill is desired to deduce it for us, and one is curious as to how he will proceed. If he succeeds in deducing it at all, it must be from some new fount of illumination, for it is certain it cannot come from the old one. The 'Experience' which suggested to the babe that—in its poor little trembling phrase—it 'could not help it,' can scarcely, by dint of being constantly repeated, suggest to the boy that he *could*. Mr Mill, who makes elsewhere so much use of the implement of 'Experience and inseparable Association,' is invited to employ it

here. Doing so, he will inevitably be forced to admit, that—Experience thus early suggesting Necessity,[1]—as cumulative in what he calls the 'collective experience of life,' it must needs have so deepened this suggestion, 'as streams their channels deeper wear,' as utterly to preclude the emergence at an after period of a feeling of Freedom opposed to it. The feeling of Freedom, therefore, which Mr Mill would fain deny, but cannot, is thus shown to emerge, *despite of* that law of 'Experience and inseparable Association' which Mr Mill holds to be the most energetic factor of belief. How, on these terms, it could ever succeed in emerging, except as what Mr Mill denies it to be, *extra*-experiential and in the *true* sense—as distinct from his palpably absurd one—a *primitive* datum of consciousness, Mr Mill is requested to explain. And the explanation, in order to be reasonably satisfactory to Mr Mill himself, must be clear and cogent indeed, seeing it has the whole weight of his own favourite law to contend against.

The only explanation I can conceive tendered is that developed at page 24 from Hume's hint, that 'the Will 'moves easily every way, and produces an image of 'itself (or a Velleity, as it is called in the schools) even

[1] Though this sense of Necessity in the child, as expressed in its 'could not help it,' seems sufficiently curious to be noted, it is not of course in the least essential to the argument here. Apart from all question of the child, the question for Mr Mill remains, *Whence* this feeling of Freedom, of a power in us to *help* our actions, the 'collective *experience* of life,' from its first to its last hour, giving, as Mr Mill expressly asserts, evidence dead the other way?

'on that side on which it did not settle.' But though not without a certain superficial plausibility, I scarcely think it approves itself on anything like a close examination. In the fact that the Will, in its moving hither and thither, in the process of deliberation, produces in its every movement 'an image of itself, or Velleity,' nothing is really explained, unless the necessity be also explained under which we are unavoidably led to *potentiate* the image, so to speak, and attribute to the so-called Velleity a vital reality as *will;* nor, unless this necessity—universal as we find its operation—be admitted a fundamental necessity of human reason, would it the least avail for Mr Mill's purpose. Were it anything short of this, Mr Mill's law of 'Experience and inseparable Association' would inevitably, with much ease, dispose of it. If Mr Mill declines to admit this, he lies open to some suspicion of being willing, for the purpose of his argument, to make little *here* of the law, of which *elsewhere* he makes so much; degrading from its place of potency, as it suits him, an agency which it suited him before, and presently will suit him again, to regard as wellnigh omnipotent. The mental law, therefore, by which unavoidably we attribute to the so-called Velleity the vital power of the *will*, is shown—as against Mr Mill—to be a fundamental necessity or law of reason; and it is submitted that, as such, it is vain to seek to invalidate it by reason, in any of its subsequent operations, of what logical rigour soever; and that the fact is really *so*, will, I trust, appear as we proceed. The result of the

whole is, that meantime—and pending such other explanation or *genesis*[1] of the feeling as Mr Mill may have to offer—he seems bound to admit in Freedom a genuine fact of human Consciousness, which amounts to his acceptance of it in *belief*. And this further result seems reached, that the only tenable attitude possible to any one denying Freedom, is that of the thorough-going sceptical gentleman before glanced at, who, denying the authority of consciousness, does not very confidently assert anything, but enthrones on the ruins of all Reality the spectre of universal Illusion. To this gentleman, it is admitted, no distinct reply is to be offered.[2]

Restricting the view a little, it seems certain that whatever *else* on the denial of Freedom may lapse into the category of Illusion, Moral distinctions *must*, and the Moral Responsibility of man. Not only on such a

[1 The challenge here thrown out to Mr Mill, has since been accepted by Mr Sully in the Essay to which I have already made reference in Appendix, Note I. (not of course that I think it likely Mr Sully ever read a word I have written). A few very brief remarks on his Paper, considered in this regard, as before I remarked on it in another, I include in Appendix, Note V.]

[2] Really none that I know of, except Hamilton's, neatly enough summed by Mr Mill in saying that the Sceptic of this kind, 'in denying all knowledge denies none.' To which probably the Sceptic would reply that he denies none; that asserting nothing, he is not so inconsequent as to deny, denial being itself a mode of assertion. He simply doubts all. This, as Hamilton says, is to doubt that he doubts. Vide *Don Juan*:—

> 'So little do we know what we're about in
> This world, I doubt, if doubt itself be doubting.'

By this doubt he is remanded to knowledge, whence he instantly proceeds to resolve himself into doubt again—and so on.

view are they sceptically dissolved, as unable to show rational basis for themselves, but the argument against them is good to ground their dogmatic negation. Every attempt hitherto—as *vide* Hume's (Appendix), and now that of Mr Mill—to harmonise with the scheme of unconditional Causation or Necessity, the *moral* nature of man, in virtue of which we hold him *culpable* in his evil actions (culpable as distinct from merely *punishable*), has resulted in helpless failure. But here, once more, if a man is quite thorough-going in his reasoning; and while denying neither Freedom, nor Morality, as facts of universal human Consciousness, develops the argument from Causation which seems to shatter the one, boldly presses it to its speculative result in the virtual extinction of the other, and declines to sacrifice these clear deductions of his Reason to what he can only regard as mere blind irrational beliefs, of which—except indeed as they are 'natural'—no account is to be given, I see not how he is to be answered, save only by answering his reasonings, which no one will ever be able to do. A Belief, were it thrice over 'Natural,' proves nothing beyond *itself* as a fact of Nature or life; it can never in the least avouch to us the reality of the thing believed; and surely beliefs—it may be urged—how sacred and important soever, are to be held somewhat in evil case, when, as here, we can only continue to cling to them in express defiance of Reason. Such beliefs, if 'natural,' as they are said to be, may always, on that ground, be trusted to maintain their practical efficiency; but, not the less,

are speculatively to be rejected as absurd. And it is really, after all, no answer to this scepticism, to allege that it carries in it a germ of the further scepticism which assails the very bases of human knowledge. This may or may not be—the Sceptic may reasonably answer—meantime, be good enough to deal with my argument on its own ground; if any flaws exist in it, I suppose them capable of being exhibited; failing to exhibit any such, you are bound to admit my conclusions. And thus far and provisionally, I must admit myself at one with the Sceptic.[1] But should it be found that all the while, the Reason, in which—within the limits by reason itself prescribed—he surely does well to trust, is being exercised beyond these limits, and in a region in which its impotence is self-confessed, in that case it seems open to us to admit the whole force of his argument, and yet demur to his conclusion. And precisely thus it will be found.

[1] Though hitherto representing the supposed Necessitarian as accepting the position of extreme scepticism, on which, in virtue of his denial as truth, of an admitted datum of consciousness, it is the aim of the dogmatist to thrust him, I do not in the least see that in strictness he is *bound* to accept it. There is consciousness—he might say—and consciousness; I call in question no *data* of consciousness save such as I have shown to contradict the scientific Reason. My argument to that effect is before you; if you cannot *answer*, in vain do you seek to *evade* it, by telling me I ought not, as denying the authority of consciousness, to be certain even of such a thing as that *two and two make four*. Produce, in your turn, the series of accurate reasonings by which *that* proposition is invalidated; having done so, and found that I, in my turn, am unable to furnish you with an answer to them, you will *then*, I admit, be entitled, from my questioning the authority of consciousness in *certain* of its *data*, to press me to question its authority in *all*. But *not*, as I think, *till then*.

The attempt to *explain* Freedom; to include it in the forms of the human understanding by effecting its logical reconcilement with the law of Universal Causation, is now, I should imagine, pretty well abandoned as hopeless. Again, to deny the *Universality* of the Law, by excluding from it human actions, in order to maintain their freedom, is somewhat too desperate an expedient, and amounts to intellectual suicide. A tenet which can only be defended by announcing a proposition so plainly absurd as this—that when a man eats, it is not because he is hungry or for any other reason known to him—had best at once be given up. The argument *in terrorem*—so to call it—from moral results of doctrine, is scarcely entitled to the name; and in any case can always be disposed of by coolly accepting the results, and requesting the opponent to disprove the reasonings by which they are reached. The evidence of Consciousness is precarious—it may be said—and ought not to be received, when it can be shown to contradict any clear deduction of reason. With the retort upon the sceptic that *here* rejecting the evidence of consciousness, he must also reject it *elsewhere*, and announce the *reductio ad absurdum* of doubt, which confounds all knowledge whatever, he may—as we have seen—very well decline to concern himself, till such time as a reasoned argument is set before him to the effect that two and two can by no possibility make four—an argument equal in force to his own which demonstrates the inconsequence of the belief in Freedom.

And as this is not likely soon to be done, it might almost seem that Freedom, as an article of belief, is a little in a bad way. And so indeed, it must be, so long as the argument is pursued on the mere ground of the logical understanding. But if reason good can be shown for discrediting the competence of the logical understanding to treat authoritatively of such a subject, in its very nature seen to *transcend* logic, as soaring or sinking into the region of aboriginal mystery, the 'final inexplicability, at which, as Sir W. Hamilton 'observes, we inevitably arrive when we reach ultimate 'facts' (*Mill*, p. 242), the aspect of the case seems altered a little; and we may find ourselves in a position to reassert the integrity of consciousness, vindicate Freedom as given in it, along with Moral Responsibility; and even, if the logical argument against these be still dogmatically pressed, to retort with effect on the opponent the charge of being wildly illogical, so confidently hurled at all believers in at least the article of Freedom.[1]

In identifying the *Will* with the human personality

[1] The stricter kind of reader may be apt to suspect confusion at some points of the above, as in fact to some trivial extent there is perhaps. It seems admitted, in parts, that the belief in Freedom is held 'in defiance of Reason,' and though 'contradicted' by it. This is only, however, meant to be provisionally admitted, from the point of view of the opponent. It will be seen that there is no contradiction; that the only Reason defied and contradicted is Reason falsely so called—a Logic at once narrow and arrogant, which constitutes itself the measure of Possibility, and dogmatically implies the proposition, that whatever is by its processes *inexplicable*, is therein branded as needs untrue and absurd.

—and this we must either decisively do, or exclude the term from the discussion, on pain of rushing into such dreadful confusions as those we have had occasion to note in Mr Mill—we seem to carry the subject into a region of thought, in which the mere Logician is as helplessly baffled as a bird would be, let loose in an impalpable ether.

'Waving his pennons vain, plump down he drops.'

Is the Will of man free? is Man a free agent? These are identical phrases; and the Will can plainly be nothing but a synonym of the Ego, or veritable *persona* of the man, as operative in his conscious act. Is the fact of Personality denied? this is the merest extravagance and deliration of scepticism: is it sought to be logically *explained?* this is the absurdest, insane pretension of reason, so called, logical. In the Ego we are face to face with a mystery, ever the more felt to be inscrutable, the more profound is the effort of abstraction, by which we strive to compass apprehension of it. Probably to only a few, and not even to these, save in rare and favoured moments of vision, is it given to look to any depth into the abyss of wonder and awe, which here for the most part lies veiled from us—so best perhaps—by what Professor Ferrier calls 'the law of familiarity.' Mr Carlyle has said of *Music*, that it 'is a kind of inarticulate unfathomable speech, 'which *leads us to the edge of the Infinite*, and lets us 'for moments gaze into *that*.'[1] Foolishness as it must

[1] Carlyle.—*Hero-Worship; The Poet as Hero.*

needs be to a certain class of readers, this seems to express with as much precision as may be, what one is here ineffectually aiming at. To say that the questions of the Divine and the Human Personality are properly but forms of the same question, would be somewhat a bold statement; yet the one is, in truth, no more *incomprehensible* than the other; nor will any merely speculative difficulty which besets the mystery of a Being, infinite, and yet as personal, only to be conceived of under some form of human limitation, ever, I believe, be matter of grave perplexity to any one who in the least adequately appreciates the depth of that other mystery with which, on the finite ground, he is every instant in contact. The human personality accepted, we must accept as utterly 'inexplicable;' '*Believe* it[1] thou must; *understand* it thou canst not,' remains for ever the formula under which we must dispose of the Ego. And if what we call the Will—as it can be no otherwise—be simply the Ego, as it flashes into conscious act, plainly, in virtue of this formula, the topic of Freedom is one not to be dogmatically dealt with under the forms of the understanding. The Ego admitted utterly mysterious and inscrutable, the property of Freedom attributed to it can scarce, in the eye of Reason, be held discredited, *merely* as also mysterious. That in Locke's phrase, we 'see not the 'way of it,' seems no insuperable objection, when it is shown that in the very nature of the case, it is plainly impossible we *should*. What sort of frantic Logic is it

[1] *Sartor Resartus.*

which, admitting a mystery, insists that it shall not be mysterious; accepts as a postulate the inexplicable; proceeds to lay down the law to it; and brands as wildly irrational so modest a *caveat* as this, that the inexplicable cannot be explained, yet is not therefore to be held incredible?

It is granted that were the Ego thrice over mysterious, *unless on good ground shown*, it is incompetent to assign to it any special mysterious attribute. But the grounds on which we assert for it the attribute of Freedom are such as, if candidly weighed, it will not be easy to gainsay. In the testimony of Consciousness, or—if Mr Mill prefers it—universal, indefeasible conviction, we have really, as Clarke well puts the matter, all the proof of it we can conceive possible, the truth of the thing being assumed—a proof indeed undemonstrative, but not therefore to be set aside, demonstrative proof being by the very nature of the case excluded. Further, apart from a belief in Freedom—not as excluding Causation, but as somehow—though *how* we know not—coexisting with it in human action on terms of reciprocal limitation[1]—we cannot on rational grounds

[1] Vide *Mill and Carlyle*, p. 111. "Moreover, to say that Necessity (Causation), as determining human action, cannot be harmonised in belief with Free-will, as in some sense and measure* *self*-determining it, is really no more than to say that Free-will is a mystery, as which it is expressly announced.

* In some sense and measure. If we conceive of Freedom and Necessity as mysteriously coexisting in the voluntary acts of rational creatures, it is plain we can only so conceive of them in degrees and variable proportions. It would be too palpable an outrage of reason to say that a man driven by a strong motive is in his act *as* free as he who is the subject of a weaker one. On the other hand,

continue to attribute validity to our moral Nature. So complete is the havoc, in this sphere involved in denial of it, that, as we have seen, *moral* distinction is not any longer to be substantiated between a sane man and a maniac.[1] Quite possibly, there *is* no such distinction; *all* such distinctions *may* be illusory; and what we call Conscience merely an idiot hallucination. But this is an extreme view;—and the balance of probability seems to incline the other way; it does really seem to be probable that sane men are not maniacs. We have thus, in favour of human Freedom—though still nothing to be called a demonstration—a distinct additional probability; and these two items of probable proof—the only kind of proof which the nature of the

[1] The *physical* distinction is of course clear; the *intellectual* distinction also might readily enough be indicated in the different relations to *motive*—what is the *moral* distinction between a sane man and a maniac? I can imagine none save that stated, as we have seen, by Mr Mill, of *control* over action in the one, and want of this power of control in the other. And once for all, the power to control or *help* our actions is—Freedom. Failing of this, all moral distinction is obliterated between sane and insane action.—(*Vide* p. 108.)

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to say that a starving wretch is no more necessitated to eat than a man who sits down to supper after dining heartily an hour or two before, is the same thing stated from the other side. That he *is* no more necessitated, speculatively, we must assert; for, as we have abundantly seen, it is the clearest deduction from the law of Causation, as applied to them, that, in relation to acts induced, the most absolutely tyrannous motive is precisely as the most absolutely trivial one, each being the sufficient determining cause of an effect inevitable as determined. But, practically, it is on all hands recognised that a strong motive necessitates, and thus excuses action, as a weaker one does not. We must thus conceive Necessity and Freedom to co-inhere in human action, as variable quantities reciprocally limiting each other; so that, whilst every action is in some strict sense necessitated, it is still in some such sense *free*, as permits us to ascribe to it a moral quality. This is, of course, to logic absurd; but, as a rough-working conception of a mystery *beyond* logic, the trustful acceptance of which is indispensable to a rational belief at once in the results of science and the validity of our moral nature, perhaps it may pass for the nonce."

case admits of—seem sufficient to *balance* the stringent logical demonstration on the other side, which includes the human volition with all else, under the one grand law of Causation. Each line of proof seems, on its own ground, good; each seems convicted of impotence, invading the territory of the other. The proof which for Freedom may be held appropriate and sufficient, is naught as against Causation, and might with quite as good effect be employed to subvert a proposition of Euclid; the Logic which approves Causation, pressing on to a denial of Freedom, vainly seeks to soar into the heaven of pure ether, unpermitted to its presumptuous wing. Had, indeed, the logical demonstration succeeded in exhibiting Freedom as an express *contradictory* of Causation, the case would have been somewhat different; we should *then* have had to choose between one or other of the beliefs; to constitute ourselves on the one hand, intellectually *felo de se*, as denying the causation of human actions, or, on the other, in the denial of Freedom, maniacs, no longer amenable to moral law. But it is not, I suppose, pretended,—or if so, it is *merely* pretended—that Freedom has thus been shown to be incredible, as *contradictory* of a truth of Science; that it is not itself a demonstrable truth of Science is all that will ever be shown; and nobody now asserts it such. That actions are *caused*, yet *free!* in this there is no contradiction;[1] the causation is admitted proved; the free-

[1] That actions are caused yet uncaused, determined yet undetermined—in this there is contradiction; that actions are determined

dom admitted *not* proved—this is really all. If the Causationist, having proved his side of the case, asks with clamorous triumph—*how* free? he is quietly answered by Tennyson,[1] 'we *know not* how;' by Locke, that he 'sees not the way of it;' and may further, if need be, be answered that 'the way of it' is probably one of the things which the angels desire to look into and cannot. No one who understands but a little of the subject would in the least be surprised to know that at this very instant of time, the 'way of it,' supposing it a truth, is a puzzle to the Angel Gabriel. Why then, if attested to us by the evidence which seems appropriate—in point of fact the *only* evidence which the nature of the case admits of—should it be held intellectual sin in us, to profess a belief in Freedom? Above all, why should Mr Mill hold it a sin in us, himself all the while believing it, though shy of professing his belief? His invaluable 'Doctrine of Causation' being left to him as good as intact—the trivial inroad upon it being that what was before 'unconditional Causation' is now in the volitional sphere mysteriously *conditioned* or limited by Freedom, with no serious harm to it as Causation—why should not Mr Mill accept the con-

yet self-determined—that man in his actions, is determined, *ab extra*, or in effect, by causes, the iron series of which stretches back into the past infinite, and yet in some sense and measure *ab intra*, by *himself*, or *freely*—in this no one can allege contradiction, however impossible it may be to explain the co-inherence in human action of the two factors, and the terms of their reciprocal limitation.

[1] "Our wills are ours, *we know not how;*
Our wills are ours, to make them thine."
—*In Memoriam.*

ciliatory wisdom of Hamilton, and taking Freedom with Necessity (Causation), 'believe both and both in unison,' even though 'this conciliation is of the things to be believed, not understood,' seeing that only thus can we compose the internecine strife indicated as otherwise inevitable between the intellectual and the moral constituents of our Nature? Except that he did not seem quite to *catch* Hamilton's wisdom, thinking plainly that in 'conciliating' two 'opposite philosophical opinions' Sir William intended to deny one of them, there seems really no reason why Mr Mill should not have accepted it. 'That propositions which, as our intelligence is 'now constituted, obstinately remain irreconcilable, 'may yet somehow, beyond the sphere of that in-'telligence, admit of being reconciled, seems no such 'extravagant proposition.'[1] I have read Mr Mill to little purpose, if, considered as a simple proposition,—apart from the special application of it—he would scout it as the least extravagant. At page 150, we find him censure an adversary for 'confounding two different 'things—the belief in contradictories, and the recogni-'tion of positive truths which merely limit one another, 'but to what extent or at what points, we cannot yet 'determine.' Is perhaps Mr Mill himself, in regard of Causation, as related to human Freedom, involved in this very confusion?

The line of reasoning here indicated, which seeks to rescue Freedom from the logical ban pronounced on it

[1] *Mill and Carlyle*, p. 111.

as inexplicable, by the identification of the Will with the mystery of the human personality, of which Logic is utterly incompetent to treat, is of course only available, so long as this incompetence is admitted.[1] And it is not by all thinkers admitted; for whilst nobody recognising the reality of the Ego, has ever pretended to 'explain' it, as comprehensible on grounds of reason, hardy speculators have now and then appeared, who considered that the Ego, which reason could not explain, it might competently decline to accredit, as yielding to the sceptical analysis. With some glance at this extreme position, I may fitly conclude the discussion.

The great name of Hume, who accepting the reasoning of Berkeley which attacked the reality of Matter, proceeded to apply it to the Mind, evaporated as also an illusion, is of course, above all others, associated

[1] It was, if I mistake not, Coleridge, who first among us decisively took this ground, and remanded the discussion to a sphere, in which it might safely contemn the tyranny of the logical understanding. There, as elsewhere, however, his reader is more or less bored by his famous distinction between the Reason and the Understanding, which never, at least in *his* hands,—whatever in those of Kant it may have done,—seemed to attain anything like scientific precision. Since Coleridge, it is to Professor Ferrier that the reader may be best referred for light upon this topic. In his *Institutes of Metaphysic*, it is only casually glanced at; but his early work, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Consciousness*, abounds with pregnant suggestion upon it. This performance he was wont in his later time to pooh-pooh a little, saying, as I have heard him do when asked why he had not thought of reprinting it from *Blackwood*, that he *had* once or twice *thought* of it, but could never quite convince himself it was altogether worth the pains. It would have been pity if in editing his *Philosophical Remains* his literary executors had not decided the matter differently.

with this extreme of speculation. It is, however, in some distinct sense, unjustly so. I have said that such a view is the mere extravagance and deliration of Scepticism; and there is evidence that by Hume himself it had come to be so considered. In his early work it is—'A Treatise of Human Nature'—that this wild speculation is developed. The material of this book,—'which the author had projected before he left 'College, and which he wrote and published not long 'after,'—in later life, he 'cast anew' in his *Essays*, complaining of opponents, who 'have taken care to 'direct all their battering against that juvenile work 'which the author never acknowledged,' and desiring that 'henceforth the following Pieces may alone 'be regarded as containing his philosophical senti-'ments and principles.' And in these Pieces, which contain the final and only authoritative digest of Hume's views, no trace did he permit to remain of that crude boyish speculation. From the Nihilism, as it is termed, which in his youth he announced, Hume must thus, in his maturity, be held to have implicitly retired, as seeing that a scepticism so extreme was discredited even as a sport of dialectic—in which light not a little of what he retained may with much plausibility be regarded. And a scepticism by Hume discarded as untenable, subsequent thinkers need scarcely have tried to reinstate. The attempt has, however, been made; and among eminent writers now living, Professor Bain and Mr Mill are to be noted, as not indisposed to assume the cast clothes

of Hume here. In his interesting discussion of the question of 'Liberty and Necessity' (vide *The Emotions and the Will*, p. 539-567)—a discussion in much to be taken objection to, but nowhere at least involved in the confusions which are rather, in Mr[1] Mill's case, to be held the rule than the exception—we find Professor Bain thus writing—'"Self-deter-'"mination" assumes something more than spon-'taneity, having a lurking reference to some power 'behind the scenes, that cannot be stated under the form of a specific motive or end. . . . If self-deter-'mination is held to imply something different from 'the operation of the motive forces of pleasurable 'and painful sensibility, coupled with the central 'spontaneity of the system, there is an imputation on 'the sufficiency of the common analysis of the mind. 'Emotion, Volition, and Intellect, as explained with 'full detail in the present work, must still leave a 'region unexplored. A fourth, or residual department, 'would need to be constituted, the department of

[1] It must be said, however, that Professor Bain succeeds in escaping from the confusions in which Mr Mill is entangled, mainly by the easy method (also adopted by Hume—see Appendix) of *evading* the essential difficulty. His remarks on 'Moral Inability—the Offender's Plea,' amount to a positive negation of *Moral* Responsibility, as distinct from Responsibility *simple*, or mere Punishment with a view to conduct in the future, 'such as we inflict on a cur to teach it to respect the carpet.' When *expressly*, in the next chapter, Moral Responsibility falls to be treated of, it is discussed in the most meagre and perfunctory way. Defining it as simple *Punishability*, Professor Bain, in the very few remarks he makes, writes exclusively from the *legal*, and absolutely *ignores* the *moral* point of view.

'"self" or Me-ation, and we should set about the 'investigation of the laws (or the anarchy) prevailing 'there, as in the three remaining branches.'

Precisely so; *rem acu tetigit;* here is the very kernel of the matter. If there be truly a living subject, Mind or *Me* (certainly, if we suppose it to exist, 'not to be stated under the form of a specific motive or end'), of which Emotion, Volition, Intellect, are mere states, or modes of activity, we certainly demand a Me-ation in addition to that so-called 'analysis of the mind,' which concerns itself with these mere modes of its manifestation. Without this there is certainly an 'imputation on the sufficiency' of the 'common analysis,' considered as an analysis of *the mind, or Me.* A department of Me-ation would distinctly 'need to be constituted,' in order to the exhaustiveness of the inquiry; but as clearly it can never be constituted, the *Me* being necessarily unable to get *behind itself,*[1] so to speak, the most exhaustive inquiry possible to us 'must still leave a region unexplored,' in which Freedom—who knows?—may have its home. This, Professor Bain perfectly well sees; and by way of getting rid of the difficulty, he quite coolly denies the existence of the mind as anything but merely the observed sum of its own states. 'The proper mean-'ing of *self* can be nothing more than my corporeal 'existence, coupled with my sensations, thoughts,

[1] 'Can I give a reason for that, beyond the circle of which I cannot 'go, without at the same time overstepping the limits of my own 'existence?'—FICHTE.

'emotions, and volitions, supposing the classification 'exhaustive, and the sum of these in the past, pre-'sent, and future.' But these states are *observed* states—observed by the *me* as *its own;* states of which *I* am conscious, and of which I am conscious as *mine*—they are '*my* corporeal existence, coupled with *my* sensations,' &c. The *Me* is of necessity admitted in the very act of denying it. Without a permanent existence calling itself 'I,' how comes it that these stray sensations, &c., in the past, present, and future, are found to sum themselves in unity as *mine?* Further—'I am not able to concede the existence of 'an inscrutable entity in the depths of one's being, to 'which the name *I* is to be distinctively applied, and 'not consisting of any bodily organ or function, or 'any one mental phenomenon that can be specified. 'We might as well talk of a mineral as different from 'the sum of all its assignable properties. A piece of 'quartz is an aggregate of inertia, specific gravity, '&c. &c. &c. The aggregate is the quartz' own self, 'essence, or whatever other designation marks it off 'from other materials.' One needs scarce offer serious reply to this. Who that knew what he was about would ever speak—as here Professor Bain implicitly makes his opponents do—of something which he calls his *Being*, and then of 'an inscrutable entity' called his *self* or *I*, distinct from that Being, and presumed to be resident somewhere 'in the depths of it'? Who ever asked the Professor to 'concede' anything so preposterous as this? Seems it not plain that a *self*

or *I* is asserted, not as distinct from, but one with the veritable *Being* of the man—an 'inscrutible entity' indeed, yet not in Professor Bain's sense inscrutable, as under some supposed necessity of being a denizen of 'the depths of *itself*,' and presumably excluded from its surface. Similar is the confusion of objecting to a mind or Ego 'not consisting of any bodily organ or function, or any one mental phenomenon.' An Ego or mind which should 'consist of bodily organs'—arms or legs, to wit, which can be cut off and presented to us on the dissecting-table, the Ego remaining intact as before—or of 'bodily functions,' such as digestion, seems somewhat an obscure conception. Not much more lucid is that of a mind consisting of 'mental phenomena.' Phenomena are needs phenomenal of something; mental phenomena must needs be phenomenal of the entity we designate Mind—an entity in its proper nature unknown, yet essential as ground of the phenomena. As to the quartz illustration, it is naught, and to be set aside as sinning in the extrusion of Consciousness, the sole matter to be explained. The bit of quartz is before me, and I know, and can only know it, as an aggregate of certain properties; the *me* also I have cognisance of, solely through the aggregate of its sensations, thoughts, &c., but these do not, as the properties in the other case, exhaust the sum of my knowledge, for I know them in the aggregate as *mine*. *How* without a *Me* presupposed, come they to *so* aggregate themselves? Plainly a *Me* must be assumed as the very principle

of aggregation. What are sensations which are '*my* sensations,' yet *not*-mine, as not belonging to a *me*? Speculations, which can only be stated in these gross forms of contradiction, may be held to bring with them their own confutation. When Professor Bain, therefore, concludes—'A self-determining power, then, 'in a voluntary agent, is merely another, and not a 'good, expression for *the ordinary course of the will*, '*as we understand it*,' he seems to say nothing to the purpose; the region of Will or Personality, when he has done all he can with 'volition,' being left behind him 'unexplored,' so that properly he can be said to *understand* nothing whatever of it.

The futility of the whole speculation, it is hoped, will further and conclusively appear, on a review of Mr Mill's contribution to the subject in his Chapter entitled, 'The Psychological Theory of Matter, how far applicable to the Mind.' With Mr Mill's Psychological Theory of Matter we are not here directly concerned, further than as it seems necessary to fix its postulates. These are sensation, expectation—with memory as the necessary condition of it—association of ideas, and 'the human mind as capable' of all these. So much granted him, Mr Mill proceeds to resolve what deludes us as the external non-ego of matter into mere 'permanent possibilities of sensation.' The discussion is of much interest, and in its way may be ranked as a masterpiece of ingenuity. It seems to admit of question, indeed, whether the element of *permanence*— on which plainly lies the stress of the

proof—is fairly deduced from the premises. To myself it looks a little as if Mr Mill, *more suo*, rather smuggles it in as he proceeds, making quiet 'conveyance' of it, as it were, from the material world, some *eidolon* of which he is engaged in trying to construct, than exhibits it as in rational process evolved. Further, it seems a little unfortunate that Mr Mill, in assuming sensation, and proceeding to work with it as a fact, of which no explanation is needed, has really left behind him unsolved, one might almost say, the whole problem.[1] Still, sensations and the

[1] Given the Ego (and, as we shall find, Mr Mill is forced, however against the grain, to concede to us the Ego), sensation is developed in it as an *effect*, some cause of which must be assigned. What is this cause? The Ego in sensation *self*-determined? This does not of itself seem a very feasible speculation, though I vaguely suppose Fichte, at one moment of his development, may have held something of the kind; and as mere matter of course, to Mr Mill it would be specially abhorrent. If the Ego, then, be not determined to sensation *ab intra*, it must needs be determined *ab extra;* in other words, by some form of a *non*-Ego. There does not seem any escape from this. Shall we assume this non-Ego, as in the system of the Natural Realist, a *material* entity known as the external world; or a *spiritual* one with the Super-Natural Realists—so call them—of whom Berkeley may stand as type? It does not seem to greatly matter which; at any height of speculation, more especially in the light of the 'Doctrine of Relativity,' now very generally acquiesced in, the distinction between them seems pretty much to disappear. Suffice it, there is given, in either case, the Ego as real, and, external to it, a universe of real existence. If belief in some form of non-Ego is thus, under the law of Causation, forced on us by the very necessities of thinking, Mr Mill may make what he will, and welcome, of the particular form of it apprehended as *matter* in consciousness. Nobody is much interested to protect from his attack the Matter, of which, as truly and in itself existing, nobody professes to know anything whatever.—*Vide* Appendix, Note VI.

rest given him, Mr Mill, with a little help from permanence as he goes, really succeeds in producing a very pretty *eidolon* of matter, and proving it, when produced, quite as serviceable as the real thing. So much achieved, and his spick and span new creation of Matter seeming to him all very good, it occurred to Mr Mill, in what I must really think a hapless moment, that perhaps an *eidolon* of Mind might be come at on the same terms. Sensation being postulated as before, and along with it now, the circle of 'our internal feelings'[1] Mr Mill seeks accordingly to show, that what we call Mind is sufficiently accounted

[1] 'Thus far there seems no hindrance to our regarding Mind as no-'thing but the series of our sensations (to which must now be added 'our internal feelings) as they actually occur, with the addition of in-'finite possibilities,' &c.

There seems in this to be some confusion. Mr Mill, who has just to his own satisfaction argued away *externality*, seems here to define sensation, as by contrast, an *external* feeling. It would be foolish, however, to press, as against Mr Mill, a confusion which, considered in itself, he no doubt could readily explain as no more than merely verbal. More pertinent, perhaps, is the following little objection:—Mr Mill defines Mind here as 'nothing but the series of our *sensations*,' together with our 'internal feelings,'—certain Possibilities being superadded. Now, either Mr Mill *does* or does *not* distinguish sensation as, in some *real* sense, *external*, from those other expressly styled '*internal* feelings.' If he *does*, he seems to admit the non-Ego, which he has argued out of existence. If, on the other hand, he does *not*, some further explanation seems required; for that very 'series of sensations and Possibilities of Sensation,' which, in *this* Chapter, are concreted into the Ego, figured in the *last* as concreted into the *non*-Ego. How this should be, except in virtue of the fundamental *antithesis* asserted by Hamilton, and by Mr Mill resolutely denied, Mr Mill can perhaps explain; but meantime he has not done so. It seems almost essential that he should.

for as no more than 'the series of those feelings supplemented by Possibilities of feeling;' that the entity called Mind has, in point of fact, no existence. But has Mr Mill really forgotten, that in originally 'postulating sensation, expectation,' &c., he was obliged to postulate 'a mind capable' of them; therefore an entity of Mind—non-entities being 'capable' of nothing—of which postulate necessary to his first demonstration, he must be held to give himself the benefit in the second, when anew he assumes sensation, together with 'internal feeling,' and of course 'expectation,' as before? Plainly, Mr Mill must have forgotten it. To postulate a capable entity Mind was legitimate for Mr Mill in an argument to prove the non-existence of Matter, but scarcely in one intended to prove the non-existence of Mind. What logical fallacy is it, in virtue of which, assuming a thing to exist, we proceed to prove that it does not, and exhibit as result of our reasonings the negation of their own premises? So far as I am aware, it has not as yet got a name, perhaps as occurring so seldom. If we call it a *petitio principii*, run mad like a sceptical philosopher, into questioning its own existence, we seem to come as near it as may be. And of this most egregious of fallacies, Mr Mill is here, beyond all question, guilty. Suppose Mr Mill—in this following what is plainly the philosophical order—had *begun* by applying his 'Psychological Theory' to *Mind*, instead of beginning, as he does, with *Matter*, one is curious to know how he would have proceeded. With the result at which he

aims in view, it would hardly have done to postulate, *in express terms*, 'a mind capable of expectation,' &c.; and a sensation or feeling, without any sentient subject, and *itself*[1] capable of expectation, is perhaps too wild a figment for even Mr Mill to take up with. His 'Psychological Theory of Mind' would thus have fairly foundered on his hands in trying to take its very first step. As it is, it only succeeds in making way at all, by quietly carrying on from the one chapter a postulate, which stultifies the result laboriously arrived at in the other.

Further, Mr Mill, having with great pains and really considerable success defended his *Theory of Mind* from certain 'extrinsic objections' alleged as fatal to it, proceeds to admit with great frankness, that 'the

[1] *Vide* Professor Mansel (*Prolegomena Logica*, p. 139).

'Does it not rather appear a flat self-contradiction to maintain that I 'am not immediately conscious of myself, but only of my sensations 'or volitions? Who, then, is this I that is conscious, and how can 'I be conscious of such states as *mine*? In this case, it would surely 'be far more accurate to say, not that I am conscious of my sensations, '*but that the sensation is conscious of itself*; but thus worded, the 'glaring absurdity of the theory would carry with it its own con-'futation.'

Now, distinctly Mr Mill either must postulate 'a Mind,' or this 'glaring absurdity' he must postulate. Beaten from his postulate of a Mind, it is here that he must hide his head; and indeed he may well hide it, for the absurdity is by himself admitted glaring; a sensation 'conscious of itself' being precisely identical in ineptitude with the 'series of sensations and feelings aware (or conscious) of itself as a series,' in which Mr Mill, with great frankness, to conclude, admits a quite hopeless paradox. Yet this paradox of 'a sensation conscious of itself,' and, a little to increase the absurdity, 'capable of expectation' to boot, has become the postulate of his argument.

'theory has intrinsic difficulties beyond the power of 'metaphysical analysis to remove;' the phenomena of Memory and Expectation 'reducing us to the alter- 'native of believing that the Mind or Ego is something 'different from any series of feelings or possibilities of 'them, or of accepting the paradox, that something 'which *ex hypothesi*, is but a series of feelings, can be 'aware of itself as a series.' (In other words, Mr Mill, having postulated Expectation—in which Memory must be held presupposed—admits himself slain by his own postulate.) It has commonly been supposed that speculations admitted to involve insuperable difficulties, and to lead into incredible paradox, therein are, in effect, admitted to be utterly worthless speculations. Mr Mill, however, as neither inclined to admit his speculation worthless, nor resolute enough in absurdity to accept the paradox it leads to, proceeds to save himself thus—

'The truth is, that we are here face to face with 'that final inexplicability, at which, as Sir W. Hamil- 'ton observes, we inevitably arrive when we reach 'ultimate facts; and in general, one mode of stating 'it only appears more incomprehensible than another, 'because the whole of human language is accommo- 'dated to the one, and is so incongruous with the 'other, that it cannot be expressed in any terms which 'do not deny its truth. The real stumbling-block is 'perhaps not in any theory of the fact, but in the fact 'itself. The true incomprehensibility perhaps is, that 'something which has ceased, or is not yet in existence,

'can still be in a manner present; that a series of feel-
'ings, the infinitely greater part of which is past or
'future, can be gathered up, as it were, into a single
'present conception, accompanied by a belief of reality.
'I think, by far the wisest thing we can do, is to ac-
'cept the inexplicable fact, without any theory of how
'it takes place; and when we are obliged to speak
'of it, in terms which assume a theory, to use them
'with a reservation as to their meaning.'

With every respect for what Mr Mill considers 'by far the wisest thing we can do,' I cannot but think Mr Mill would have done a much wiser thing, had he simply admitted as a datum of consciousness, the Ego which, as he confesses, his Psychological method has utterly failed to evolve; and which, however in itself inexplicable, satisfactorily explains the phenomena. As it is, he seems here a little to lie open to the criticism he himself has elsewhere—and I think with justice — directed against Sir W. Hamilton (p. 544, 545): 'He lays the responsibility of the failure not 'upon his theory (of Pleasure), but upon the general 'inexplicability of ultimate facts. This appears to me 'a great misconception, on our author's part, of what 'may rightfully be demanded from a theorist. He 'is not entitled to *frame a theory from one class of 'phenomena, extend it to another class which it does not 'fit, and excuse himself by saying that if we cannot make 'it fit, it is because ultimate facts are inexplicable.*' Mr Mill seems in this, with some closeness, to describe his own procedure. Again—'If we do propound a theory,

'we are bound to prove all it asserts; it is not philoso-
'phical to assert a thing, and *fall back upon the in-*
'*comprehensibility of the subject, as a dispensation from*
'*proving it. What is a hindrance to proving a theory*
'*ought to be a hindrance to affirming it.*' In which last sentences Mr Mill must be held to satisfactorily *expunge* his own Chapter on the 'Psychological Theory of Mind.'

These little griefs are, however, as nothing to those which Mr Mill presently goes on to earn for himself, as obstinately determined not to concede to Hamilton the Ego as given in Consciousness. The opening paragraph of his next Chapter (XIII. 'The Psychological Theory of the Primary Qualities of Matter') probably includes as much blunder and ineptitude as any Philosopher has ever yet succeeded in packing in the same space.

'For the reasons which have been set forth, I con-
'ceive Sir W. Hamilton to be wrong in his statement
'that a Self and not-Self are immediately appre-
'hended in our primitive consciousness. We have, in
'all probability, no notion of Not-self, until after con-
'siderable experience of the recurrence of sensations
'according to fixed laws, and in groups. But without
'the notion of Not-self, we cannot have that of Self
'which is contrasted with it. Nor is it credible that
'the first sensation which we experience awakens in
'us any notion of an Ego or Self. To refer it to an
'Ego is to consider it as part of a series of states of
'consciousness, some portion of which is already past.

'The identification of a present state with a remem-
'bered state cognised as past, is what, to my think-
'ing, constitutes the cognition that it is I who feel it.
'"I" means he who saw, touched, or felt something
'yesterday or the day before. No single sensation
'can suggest personal identity; this requires a series
'of sensations, thought of as forming a line of suc-
'cession, and summed up in thought into a Unity.'
(P. 214, 1st Edition.)

Not only is it entirely 'credible' that 'the first sensation we *experience*' may 'awaken in us a notion of the Ego,' but—except for his own express testimony to that effect—I should have held it utterly *in*credible that a man like Mr Mill should conceive of the fact as otherwise. The 'first sensation we experience' is, of course, a fact of 'consciousness;' sensations which are not in consciousness do not, as such, exist, and can be plainly no part of our 'experience.' Now, how are we to define Consciousness? Hamilton defines it as 'the recognition by the *mind* or *Ego* of *its own* acts or affections;' and 'in this,' says Mr Mill, 'as he *truly* observes, "*all* philosophers are agreed."' Consequently, as Mr Mill does not probably mean to exclude himself as in a minority of one, and *no* philosopher, he accepts Hamilton's definition. And accepting it, he must also accept—however against the grain—the Ego apprehended in primitive sensation, as conscious of, or 'cognising its own affection;' unless indeed—which seems a little too absurd—he is prepared to maintain that we can 'experience' sensa-

tions, without in the least being 'conscious' of them. Mr Mill's whole Chapter XII. 'The Psychological Theory of Matter, how far applicable to Mind,' is thus at one stroke demolished. This for Mr Mill seems sufficiently grievous; but a worse grief is behind. For, the Ego being thus given us in primitive consciousness—and this Mr Mill can only deny by rushing upon the wild absurdity above—the Non-Ego is, according to Mr Mill himself, *given us along with it.* 'Without the notion of *not*-Self, we cannot have that of Self which is contrasted with it.' The Not-self, even if it could not otherwise be got at, is thus legitimated by the Self, given—as we have seen,—in this necessary 'relation of contrast,' by Mr Mill himself insisted on. Mr Mill's Chapter XI., therefore, 'The Psychological Theory of the Belief in an External World,' must fleet into the limbo of abortions along with Chapter XII.; and—sad to say—Chapter XI. about 'Matter' having fleeted in that direction, Chapter XIII. about 'The Primary Qualities of Matter,' may plainly, without curious inquiry into it, be also held to have fleeted. It seems probable that considerable sections of Mr Mill's previous direct *criticism* of *Hamilton's Review of Theories on the Belief of an External World,* would on any strict examination of it, be found to have gone the same bad road. Mr Mill writes a good deal of criticism; he supplements it with *three* Chapters of original and highly ingenious speculation; then, *presto,* in about as many sentences (when we have merely pulled

them about a little), he is found to have conclusively shattered his own most imposing fabric. Has any feat comparable to this been brought home by him to Sir W. Hamilton? I trow not. What is specially to be insisted on is this, that my criticism of Mr Mill here—which I venture to think cannot at any point be evaded—shuts him up to acquiescence in the very doctrine, against which throughout he is arguing—Hamilton's doctrine to wit, that Consciousness gives 'as an ultimate fact, a primitive duality, the Ego and 'Non-Ego in an original synthesis and antithesis.' Mr Mill, in arguing *against* Hamilton, is here—though strangely unaware of the fact—in true and fundamental agreement with him. *Here*, at least, it seems shown that the relation of Mr Mill to Hamilton is not of that absolutely triumphant kind which his idolaters have been eager to assume it.[1]

[1] The above is reproduced *verbatim* from a little paper published some considerable time before the issue of Mr Mill's third Edition of his work. That it ever came under the eye of Mr Mill, I have no special reason to suppose. But that *somehow*, he had become uneasily aware that here he had brought himself to grief, is in his third Edition made evident. That fatal clause, 'But without the notion of Not-Self,' &c., he deletes, with this explanatory Note—'In the first 'Edition I said—"But without the notion of Not-Self, we cannot '"have that of Self which is contrasted with it." In saying this I 'overlooked the fact that my own sensations and other feelings, as 'distinguished from what I call Myself, are a sufficient Not-Self to 'make the Self apprehensible. The contrast necessary to all cogni-'tion is sufficiently provided for by the antithesis between the Ego 'and particular modifications of the Ego.'

This is well; and might almost be held to show that Mr Mill is not *now* 'in true and fundamental agreement with Hamilton,' though beyond all question he *was* so, when he issued his first Edition. And

Further—'No single sensation can suggest per-'sonal identity; this requires a series of sensations, 'thought of as forming a line of succession, and 'summed up in thought into a Unity.' This is granted; but with a single sensation as emerging in Consciousness, there emerges necessarily, as we saw, the Ego conscious of, or cognising it—the Personality; and in order to the notion of identity, only one more sensation will be needed, cognised as also *mine*. Moreover, declining to admit the Ego, as thus emerging in primitive consciousness, it is surprising Mr Mill should have failed to see that the Ego, as

it is not unamusing to note, that in getting out of his agreement with Hamilton, he gets out of agreement with *himself*. For his admission of an original 'antithesis between the Ego and particular modifications of the Ego, sensations, and other feelings,' simply withers to the very root his 'Psychological Theory of Mind.' Moreover, as we saw (page 147), if Mr Mill will only for an instant inquire as to the *cause* of these 'modifications of the Ego,' he will find, perhaps a little to his disgust, that he is *still* in so far 'in fundamental agreement with Hamilton,' as under his own pet law of Causation, constrained to admit either a self-determining Ego—which of course he would rather die than admit—or a Non-Ego of some sort, as a *real external existence*. For, however Mr Mill may wish it otherwise, the '*Ex nihilo*,' &c., remains as an axiom unimpeachable, and a thing which does not exist, cannot exist as *cause*. Belief in some form of a Non-Ego being thus forced upon us by the very necessities of thinking (supposing we take the trouble to think), does Mr Mill really suppose it of supreme importance to inquire as to the development of the Non-Ego, empirically apprehended in Consciousness? *Metaphysically* the inquiry is of *no* importance; *psychologically* it is of much interest for those who are interested in the spinning of cobwebs, and like to observe the operation; somewhat as a curious Naturalist may delight to watch a spider at work. From *this* point of view, Mr Mill's elaborate speculation as to Matter is already sufficiently recognised, as a great *tour de force* of ingenuity.

he himself proceeds to constitute it, could never at all have emerged. Nothing is more certain than that Mr Mill's account of the Ego, as developed in *later* Consciousness, necessitates belief in it as given in a *previous* Consciousness, which Mr Mill—the argument being merely pushed back a little—could be forced to recognise as *primitive*. 'To refer it (Sensa-'tion) to an Ego, is to consider it as part of a series 'of states of consciousness, some portion of which is 'already past. The identification of a present state 'with a remembered state cognised as past, is what, 'to my thinking, constitutes the cognition that it is 'I who feel it. "I" means he who saw, touched, or 'felt something yesterday or the day before.' But surely, in order that 'I' should have seen or touched something the day before, 'I' must *then* have been in existence; 'a remembered state cognised as past, 'and identified with a state now present,' must itself have been cognised as *present* in the past to which reference is made. In order to be *re*cognised, and identified with a present sensation as also *mine*, plainly the sensation in the past, must *then* have been *so cognised*. At whatever point, therefore, in the series of sensations, Mr Mill makes the Ego commence its operations in remembrance and identification, he will be driven to admit that it must have commenced them *before*, as *cognising* the thing it now remembers or *re*cognises. Unless, indeed, Mr Mill's Ego has a talent for remembering what took place before it came into existence!

Turning to the explanatory Discussion, which Mr Mill now appends to these Chapters, one is driven to conclude that an Ego of *this* kind is really that substituted by Mr Mill for the Ego of primitive consciousness. We there find him writing—'Since the 'fact which alone necessitates the belief in an Ego, 'the one fact which the Psychological Theory cannot 'explain, is the fact of Memory (for Expectation I 'hold to be both psychologically and logically a 'consequence of Memory), I see no reason to think 'that there is any cognisance of an Ego, *until Memory* '*commences.* There seems no ground for believing 'with Sir W. Hamilton, and Mr Mansel, that the 'Ego is an original presentation of consciousness; 'that the mere impression on our senses involves, 'or carries with it, any consciousness of a Self, any 'more than I believe it to do of a Not-self. Our 'very notion of a Self takes its commencement, there 'is every reason to suppose, from the *representation* '*of a sensation in Memory,* when awakened by the 'only thing there is to awaken it before any associa-'tions have been formed—namely, the occurrence of 'a subsequent sensation similar to the former one. 'The fact of *recognising a sensation, of being reminded* '*of it,* and, as we say, remembering that it has been 'felt before, is the simplest and most elementary fact 'of Memory.'

This is an excellently clear statement; and see to what Mr Mill is self-committed in it; to representations in memory, of sensations, whereof there was no pre-

vious *presentation;* to sensations *re*cognised or *re*minded in the present, and yet not in the past originally *cognised,* or *minded;* to 'subsequent sensations' by the Ego apprehended as '*similar* to former ones,' which the Ego, as not then in existence, could not possibly then have apprehended. Mr Mill's Ego, as I said, is an Ego with the mysterious property of remembering things which took place some time before it was born.[1] Mr Mill, in declining to admit

[1] All this is so well and clearly put by Professor Ferrier, that instead of *rehashing* him as here, I might have been well content simply to quote his masterly statement of it (vide *Institutes of Metaphysic,* p. 81, 82):—

'A theory of self-consciousness, opposed to the doctrine advanced 'in our first proposition, has been sometimes advocated. It reduces 'this operation to a species of reminiscence; it affirms that we are '*first* cognisant of various sensible impressions, and are not conscious 'of ourselves, until we reflect on them *afterwards.* But this doc-'trine involves a contradiction; for it supposes us to recollect 'certain impressions to have been ours, *after* they have been experi-'enced, which we did not know to be ours *when* they were experi-'enced. A man cannot remember what never happened. If the 'impressions were not known to be ours at the time, they could not 'subsequently be remembered to have been ours, because their re-'collection would imply that we remembered an antecedent connec-'tion between ourselves and them; which connection, however, had 'no place in our former experience, inasmuch as this theory declares 'that no self was in the first instance apprehended; therefore, if the 'impressions are recognised on reflection to have been ours, they 'must originally have been known to be ours. In other words, we 'must have been conscious of self at the time when the impressions 'were made.'

Could the 'impossible consciousness *before* consciousness,' which at starting, I alleged to be involved in Mr Mill's mode of conceiving the relations of *consciousness* and *experience,* possibly be better illustrated than as we find it in this passage.

in an Ego, so mysterious in its properties as this such a trifle, by comparison, as Freedom, seems oddly to strain at a gnat, after just having swallowed a camel, as deftly as he might an oyster.

In fine—Mr Mill, in now proceeding to further explain the position he before took up, writes—'Having 'stated these facts (of Memory and Expectation) as 'inexplicable by the Psychological Theory, I left them 'to stand as facts, without any theory whatever; not 'adopting the Permanent Possibility hypothesis as a 'sufficient theory of Self, in spite of the objections to 'it, as some of my critics have imagined, and have 'wasted no small amount of argument and sarcasm in 'exposing the untenability of such a position; neither, 'on the other hand, did I, as others have supposed, 'accept the common theory of Mind, as a so-called 'Substance.'

Mr Mill seems in this to ignore the not unimportant fact before noted, that Memory and Expectation, though 'inexplicable' by the Theory he proposes, are quite satisfactorily explained by the ordinary theory of the Ego, *itself* inexplicable, yet accepted as a *datum*, or more properly, a necessary condition of Consciousness; a theory for which he admits, as we saw, thus much is always to be said, that 'the whole of human language 'is accommodated to it; and is so incongruous with 'the other, that it cannot be expressed in any terms 'which do not deny its truth.' It seems to me that a theory which can say this for itself, and which is further commended to us as at once explaining the facts,

which the other Theory is bound to explain and is driven to confess it cannot, is, of the two, very much the preferable Theory. But plainly Mr Mill would do anything rather than admit it so. And yet, in effect, in the end he admits all that anybody wants of him. 'As such (an original element) I ascribe a reality to 'the Ego—to my own mind—different from that real 'existence as a Permanent Possibility, which is the 'only reality I acknowledge in Matter; and by fair 'experiential inference from that one Ego, I ascribe 'the same reality to other minds.' This is, in truth, a virtual concession of all that Hamilton contends for, in assuming the Ego, as a fact, for which we have the authority of consciousness. If thus admitting a *reality* in the Ego, Mr Mill still declines to admit it, as *Substance,* this seems only to mean that Mr Mill is at once constrained to admit, and yet determined to deny. If Mr Mill does not define Substance precisely as he must the Ego—a Reality, in itself unknown, yet subsumed as a necessary ground of phenomena—'a bond of con-'nection to hold a group or series of otherwise uncon-'nected phenomena together' (p. 246) one is puzzled to guess how he would define it.

On the whole, I think we may conclude with some confidence, that if the argument from Personality, as neutralising that against Freedom derived from the Causation of human actions, in itself be worth anything, it will not be seriously invalidated by any such sceptical resolution of the human Personality itself, as

that by Mr Mill here abortively suggested, and admitted by himself abortive.

And here it may be well to conclude a Dissertation which has strayed considerably beyond the limits at first proposed for it. The doctrine of 'Conciliation' set forth in it—essentially that, as I believe, by Hamilton meant to be indicated—which admits Necessity on the one hand (meaning only the Causation from which, in the exclusion of Freedom, Necessity might seem to be a logical inference), yet combines with it a belief in Freedom, while admitting inability to explain the coinherence of the two in human action, or the terms of their reciprocal limitation, might readily be shown to be the only one which fits itself to all the facts, and adjusts the scale of the variations which prevail in our moral judgments. Further, it will be found that the sanity of these is compromised, precisely as we ignore, or even cease to assign its due importance to either one or other of these constituent factors of human action. Too exclusively dwelling on Necessity or the Causal influence, we find it difficult to attribute *blame* to any action whatever; the springs of healthy indignation

[1] A good deal of the ground covered by the foregoing Discussion is very ably and intelligently gone over in the concluding Sections of Professor Masson's *Review of Recent British Philosophy;* and while there is no great similarity in the general treatment here, yet the point of view at one or two places so closely approximates to his, that this reference seems only proper. Mr Mill, in his Third Edition, has not answered Professor Masson's argument; nor could he, I think, have done so.

are relaxed; and we reach that questionable habit of mind, in which a bastard charity is one with the deadliness of moral indifference. Too exclusively dwelling on Freedom, in oblivion of the awful pressure on 'the afflicted Will'[1] of causal circumstance and temptation, we are but too apt to sin in the opposite extreme of some rigour of harsh and inhuman judgment. In the one case, our sense of merit and demerit in actions is apt to be unduly weakened in a cynical approximation of the two; in the other case, the opposite danger is incurred of undue exaggeration of both considered as extremes of divergence. Giving to each side of the complex truth its due; holding fast the Freedom of the Will, yet remembering always the tragical 'afflictions' to which it is causally subjected, we have ground, on the one hand, of stern and righteous rigour of judgment; on the other, of an infinite tenderness and compassion, a thoughtful charity which does not wholly exclude from its regards the vilest and most abandoned criminal who ever libelled our common humanity. And this is, I rather think, the ethical attitude, prescribed by our highest standards.[2]

[1] 'The dread strife
Of poor Humanity's afflicted Will
Struggling in vain with ruthless Destiny.'—*Excursion.*
By Wordsworth indicated as the root-Idea of all Tragedy. It finely expresses or implies the doctrine contended for. The Will of Man is not Free in the absolute sense; it is an 'afflicted Will,' as beset with tragical limitations, which, however they perpetually 'afflict,' do not yet annihilate it as Will.

[2] Some excellent remarks on this subject may be found in the work of Dr Travis, to which allusion was before made.

If at all we are to divorce in our minds these two sides of the truth, on the whole it might not be amiss to consider chiefly the side of Freedom when taking account of our own rather questionable actions ;[1] that of Necessity in judging of those of our neighbours. In regard again of the *good* actions of ourselves and of others, it may be better perhaps to reverse this,—considering chiefly in ourselves the law of necessary Causation, that of Freedom[2] as the law of other people. By merely attending to a couple of rules so simple and obvious as these, a man might almost flatter himself that, according to the measure of his attention to them, he was becoming as near as possible perfect in the matter of his moral judgments ; by the discipline of humility on the one hand ; on the other, of charity, forbearance, and genial recognition of the good as it lives all round him. But it is sufficiently obvious that this is seldom our way of arranging the matter ; that we are a little apt, on the ground of necessary pressure and temptation, to

[1] [The point of view here is, of course, very closely coincident with that of Mr Mill before he had soared to his higher stage of illumination on the subject. See passage in his Autobiography quoted in the preface: 'I often said to myself what a relief it would be if I could 'disbelieve the doctrine of the formation of the character by circum-'stances ; and remembering the wish of Fox respecting the doctrine of 'resistance to governments, that it might never be forgotten by kings, 'nor remembered by their subjects, I said that it would be a blessing 'if the doctrine of Necessity could be believed by all *quoad* the char-'acters of others, and disbelieved in regard to their own.']

[2] 'The Law of Freedom !' The expression is at once scientifically absurd, and non-scientifically accurate. On the one hand, we cannot conceive of Moral Freedom, except as an outrage of Causal Law ; on the other, we can only define it as a higher Law of Life, traversing that Causal One, whose sublimities are those of Death. A Law of

excuse our own little trespasses, forgetting on the same ground to allow for those of our friends; on the ground of Freedom, to glorify our own little pitiful virtues and immunities, as if they were really *ours*, while tending a little to depreciate the perfections of others, as if scarcely so accurately *theirs*, as coming to them by virtue of happy circumstance, and mere necessities of Law and Nature. And apart from this it seems also uncommonly obvious that, practically, an admission of both sides of the complex truth, Causation or Necessity on the one hand, Freedom on the other, does largely and influentially determine the moral judgments of mankind—from which there might seem to be inference that the Conciliatory Doctrine, which includes both, is not very unlikely to be the true one.

While I am far from thinking that the question of theoretical belief on this subject is unimportant in its bearing upon practice, it is certain its practical influence may very readily be exaggerated; as in truth some tendency to exaggerate it is not unfrequently to be noted in writers on behalf of Freedom—to say nothing of the numerous enthusiasts on behalf of it who, deprived of their gross exaggerations of this kind, would be left helplessly without an argument. The fal-

Life! One wonders if it ever occurs to Mr Mill and other gentlemen of the Omniscient school, to ask themselves what essentially they know about *Life*, in any form of it? According to the latest lights, the most advanced philosopher yet known can be positive as to nothing more than this about it—that it is precisely some such unexplained 'Conciliation of Opposites' as that which he scouts as a puerile delusion, when asserted in the other, or Moral sphere.

lacy which underlies these exaggerations has already been sufficiently discussed (*vide* p. 112 *et seq.*) and need not again be more than merely glanced at. Whether—as one school of thinkers maintain—the Idea of Moral Distinctions be come at as a primary intuition, or vital fact of human Consciousness, or developed as a birth of Experience under the law of Association—as to which Mr Mill is clear—is a question somewhat obscure. Happily, as thus obscure, it is also a little unimportant, like a good many other deep and obscure questions; and the sense of Moral Distinctions, so rooted in primal instinct, or in habit which has almost the depth of that, may very well be trusted, in either case, to maintain itself in life and practice against the inroads of speculative Theory, accepted with whatever fulness of conviction; pretty much as the practical claims of Matter remain unaffected by the reasoning, however distinctly acquiesced in, which evaporates it into mere Idea and Illusion. This Analogy, however, does by no means so accurately go on all-fours that it could not be shown to limp a little;[1] and however it may be easy to exaggerate the probable effects on conduct of the Theory which, excluding Freedom, for every consistent thinker, excludes with it Moral Responsibility, it has not the less *tendencies* to influence conduct, which it is quite idle to suppose not at all expressed in the result. On this subject, as to which it would be easy to enlarge, two remarks only. Mr Mill himself in a general way admits 'the *depressing* effect

[1] *Mill and Carlyle*, p. 115, 117.

'of the Fatalist Doctrine, as humiliating to Pride and 'paralysing to Desire of Excellence' (the believer in Freedom will do well to retain as much of it as may be found 'humiliating to Pride') admitting also that belief in Freedom has frequently 'given to its ad-'herents a practical feeling, much nearer to the truth 'than has generally existed in the minds of Ne-'cessitarians, and fostered a stronger spirit of self-'culture' than the opinion to which it is opposed. It seems to me that of two opinions, the one which is admitted to induce 'a practical feeling nearest to the truth' is rather more likely to be true than the other. (As before said, the *exact* truth is only to be hit by combining in a wretchedly illogical way the unharmonised, yet not contradictory opinions.) And, as we have abundantly seen, between Mr Mill's Doctrine denying Freedom, and a Fatalistic one, the distinction is no more than the dream of an eminent Logician, whose Logic has for the time gone elsewhere. Further, it is the most familiar of all experiences that the fullest belief in Freedom does not prevent us from habitually using so much as we admit of Causation in temptation and malign conjunctions of Circumstance, as excuse to ourselves of any little lapse we may be guilty of. And what believing in Freedom, we thus do inevitably, unawares, and unconsciously, the belief in Freedom withdrawn, and Causation only believed in, there seems really some ground to suppose we might come to do in full Consciousness, and with express approval of Reason. It is in this way, and as subtle anodyne of

one's own accusing Conscience, that practically the Doctrine of Necessity or Fate is most to be feared. Its effect, even in this way, may readily enough be exaggerated; and there does not seem the least risk to speak of, that, however it might lead us to a little excuse our own sins, it could ever make us sin in any excess of leniency to those of our friends which might touch us in either skin or pocket.

The main interest of the question as to human Freedom is *speculative;* and however Mr Mill—as we have seen—may exhibit himself unable to distinguish between the practical point of view and the speculative, the Speculative question remains, when the Practical one is dismissed as, by comparison, of little import. Further, at this day remaining, it is not unlikely to remain some little time longer. Science was really, in any accurate notion of it, *not first constituted as such,* when it attached to itself the title of Positive to conjure with. Positive Philosophy may be as positive as it will within its circle of certainty and demonstration; but there can never, for the souls of men not merely bewildered, be anything more to be revered in it than we find in the Multiplication Table, or in the plain Mathematical Axiom that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. (Mr Mill, by the way, supposes that possibly they *may*—somewhere else.) The attempt to find anything more in it is really no whit less ridiculous, than if a delirated Mathematical Sage should go on all his life producing his straight lines, and announcing, in what we could scarce call a 'divine

despair,' that though a Space was not yet enclosed, perhaps one of these days it would be, and that in fact he was quite *positive* it would. It seems quite safe to predict that the exaggerated claim made for Science, writing *Positive* after its name, somewhat as a paltry *Parvenu* takes a pride in writing himself *Esquire,* will, one of these days, be smiled at by all intelligent people as merely the innocent deliration of such a Mathematical Sage. Meantime, the phenomenon is curious, as illustrating the depth of the Religious Principle. God the Father is plainly, in many quarters extinct as an object of worship. We have found out so many of His 'Laws,' that the difficulty of getting beyond them—more especially for those who have found them out—is one in all seriousness to be admitted. Some grand new 'Law' being discovered, what more natural than that the Discoverer should assert it distinctly *his* Law; furiously throttle a fellow-Philosopher pretending to have a *priority;* and dispute any claim to Priority injuriously asserted for even the Deity Himself? Nothing is more natural and obvious. The Deity is thus a little in abeyance just at present; and even so exalted a supporter as the Duke of Argyll[1] has not so brought Him into fashion again as one might have been disposed to expect. In these circumstances, it is comfortable to note the facility with which people who

[1] The allusion here must have been, I suppose, to the Duke's *Reign of Law,* shortly before published. The passage has been censured as irreverent. I cannot myself see it so; and I should seriously desire to know whether it is to the Deity or the Duke of Argyll that I am supposed to have intended disrespect?]

ignore the Deity—to *deny* Him would be to admit Him as a possible subject of speculation, and pay Him too great a compliment—can take up with a Mathematical Axiom instead; and failing the Mathematical Axiom —the discovery being made in mature years that the affections actually exist as the deepest constituents of human Nature—can substitute a Wife or a Mistress.[1]

These frivolities apart, the question of Necessity and Freedom has been, is, and must remain positively *central* to the whole discussion which from age to age is perpetuated between the Philosophies of Belief and of Scepticism—the essential field of battle, after skirmishing has been done at the outposts. Freedom, Personality (he who does not admit the terms identical discredits himself as incompetent) *this* it is which distinguishes Man from dead matter and the brute. Is Man *free?* The question is identical with this other one—Is there in man a *spiritual* element not present in an oyster or other mollusc? Is man, in Shakespeare's profound and prescient phrase, 'the *slave* of

[1 I am not without a horrid dread that Mr Mill (supposing him to have read the little book of which I sent him a copy) may have dimly suspected in this an allusion personal to himself. Had Mr Mill's Autobiography been given to the world when I wrote, such an allusion, however held questionable in taste, could not have been called unfair. As it was, had I meant to hint any such matter, a horse-pond or the next pump might appropriately have given me my reward. But I could not intend to allude to matters of which I was ignorant. The allusion was, of course, not to Mr Mill, but to his distinguished *confrère*, M. Comte, with his glorified Clotilde de Vaux, whom he wished the future world to worship as a substitute for the Virgin Mary.]

Nature,'[1] or its lord? This is essentially the question of questions in Philosophy; the question of the Will and its Freedom is essentially the question of questions determinant of any secure settlement of it. So wrangled over as it has been, almost a certain ridicule seems fairly enough directed against any one seriously concerning himself with it. But the ridicule is not the less idle; the World does not go on sillily wrangling for thousands of years about matters of no real importance to it.

[1] 'The slave of Nature and the son of Hell.'—*Richard III.*

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.—See p. 11.

MOTIVELESS OR UNCAUSED VOLITION.

IT has always been a favourite line of argument with Necessitarians to represent the advocates of Freedom as denying Motives or Causes. Mr Mill, as we have seen, does so; and in the latest contribution to British thought on this subject—Mr Sully's interesting and ingenious paper 'On the Genesis of the Free-Will Doctrine'[1]—the same ground is taken. The assumption is made throughout, that a believer in Freedom must needs hold himself committed to it, under the special mode of—to use his own terms—'the fortuitous 'and unpredictable selection of an undetermined mind or 'will.' 'This,' he says, 'is as good a definition of the '*curious tenet* as the present writer is able to frame. And 'to this theory,' he goes on to say, 'which is not only 'unique, but in direct contradiction to the principles by 'which, confessedly, all other departments of phenomena 'are explained, the supporters of Free-will have *ipso facto* 'committed themselves.' To such a statement as this, with

[1] Sensation and Intellect. Studies in Psychology and Æsthetics. By James Sully, M.A. Henry S. King & Co., London.

every respect for Mr Sully, I must beg distinctly to demur. That human volition is *unique*, in the sense of its being 'exempted from the law of Causation,' which dominates 'all other departments of phenomena,' is plainly an absurd and irrational proposition; and a philosopher gives himself easy times who seeks to confute an opponent, as committed to it, *ipso facto* of his belief. 'Many men' (*Mill and Carlyle*, p. 76) 'will say that at any given time they feel 'themselves free to eat, or not to eat; but will any man 'say that when he does eat, he eats not because he is 'hungry, but "for no reason in particular"' (Mr Mill's pet way of putting it)? 'Plainly there is no such 'blockhead. In the cases, again, in which hunger was 'not the reason of his eating, a man very well knows 'there was some other cause or sufficient reason, failing 'which he would not have eaten. *How*, this reason sup-'posed sufficient to make him eat, he should yet have been 'free not to eat, no competent person professes his ability to 'explain.' An incompetent person, who held himself bound to explain, would, no doubt, unless *very* incompetent, speedily find himself in difficulties; and in seeking a way out of them, he might not improbably blunder on the announcement of some such ridiculous 'theory' as that set forth by Mr Sully. Indeed, it is not to be denied that some very profound people have done so. Under stress of a hopeless argument, which sought to make liberty *comprehensible*, foolish things may have been written—as in truth a good deal of Philosophy is no more than a record of the 'follies of the Wise'—but such clearly ill-considered deliverances ought not to be held good as against other people, who would merely scout and contemn them. 'One '.of the unfairest, though commonest tricks of controversy,'

writes Mr Mill, 'is that of directing the attack against the 'crudest (first crude) form of a doctrine.' It is a trick of which I have shown Mr Mill himself to be guilty, in his polemic against Hamilton in regard of this particular matter; and Mr Sully, as we see, follows him to do evil. (As the merest matter of course, against neither writer do I mean to insinuate unfairness—which the use of the word trick might imply,—merely a little misapprehension in both of the true point of the controversy.)

Mr Sully having given in set terms 'as good a *definition* of this curious tenet as he is able to frame,' proceeds, in his next sentence—'At the same time, it must be remarked 'that its advocates have *rarely* sought to reduce it to a '*precise definitive form.*' This seems to mean (at least, I can no otherwise understand it) that *very few indeed* of the advocates of the 'curious tenet' have ever given any such definition of it, as that to which all of them, according to Mr Sully, have, in their belief, '*ipso facto* committed themselves.' To this '*ipso facto* committed' it is that I particularly take objection. I may believe in Free-will, or I may not (I am not aware of having ever written a word which pledges me very personally to a belief in it), but supposing I *do* believe in Free-will, why am I '*ipso facto* committed' to a definition or theory of it, framed for me by Mr Mill or Mr Sully, which seems to me as preposterous and absurd, as it possibly could to either of them? Surely it is competent for me, as for another, to believe in a thing as a *fact* (on evidence which seems to me appropriate and sufficient), yet decline to hold myself therein 'committed' to definitions and so-called 'theories' of it which are forged for me by other people. I may believe in the thing as a fact, whilst seeing in the sharpest and clearest way that, as no rational

definition or theory of it can ever possibly be substantiated, none had best be put forward; the thing itself believed in, the express modus or *how* of it may be left altogether undetermined.

Might it be permitted me to quote here (as at p. 152), Mr Mill's wisdom as regards the Ego (more properly, in a sense, the *non*-Ego—the Ego which Mr Mill in an exceedingly futile manner, as we have seen, seeks to argue out of existence)? 'I think by far the wisest thing we can do is to 'accept the *inexplicable fact*, without any *theory* of how it 'takes place; and when we are obliged to speak of it, in '*terms which assume a theory*, to use them with a *reserva*-'*tion as to their meaning.*' So of the Will (which *is* the Ego, or—nothing). It is surely allowable for us to believe in the Freedom of the Will as 'an inexplicable fact,' yet '*ipso facto* commit ourselves' to no ridiculous theory of it —a *theory* of an *inexplicable*—unless, indeed, an absurd one —being plainly a contradiction in terms.

That this was the view of the matter taken by Sir W. Hamilton, I have elsewhere, as against Mr Mill (see Section VII.), sought to demonstrate *in extenso*. As for Reid, it is not to be denied that here and there in his reasonings on this subject he *does* glance, in some helpless way, in the direction of uncaused volition and 'action for no reason in particular.' But almost invariably when he does so, we find him contemptuously reprimanded by Hamilton in a note at the bottom of the page. In elsewhere announcing, as we have seen (p. 10), 'the Man as Cause,' he shows plainly that he saw clearly enough the difficulties of such a position; and this special announcement of a Cause (though futile, as I think it, in the extreme) must in fairness be held to protect him against the imputation of holding volitions

to be 'fortuitous,' as exempt from the all-including law of Causation.

By Mr W. T. Thornton, very recently, this subject has been incidentally discussed in his essay on "History's Scientific Pretensions;"[1] and while, on the authority of Consciousness, steadily asserting Free-Will, as an 'indisputable reality,' he equally asserts as indisputable that 'human volitions take place as inevitable effects of antecedent Causes;' that 'the Will is absolutely subject to, and *must* implicitly 'obey Causes.' His doctrine, involving belief at once in Freedom and Necessity (such Necessity, Inevitability—call it what you will—as may be logical inference from Causation) is thus identical with that set forth in the foregoing pages, as essentially (I believe) Sir W. Hamilton's. That Mr Thornton's discussion (incidental and brief as it necessarily is) can be held at all points satisfactory; that it faces the full difficulty involved in the very notion of Free-Will, and makes it the least more comprehensible to us,—I shall not very confidently assert. Given a chain of Causal sequences, in which a particular volition is figured as the last link, *how*, as 'the inevitable effect' of these determining antecedents, is it possible to conceive of it as *free*, in the sense—the only one which fulfils the definition—that the man could have determined it *otherwise?* The notion is quite plainly to our mere Logic incompetent.

More lately (*vide* passage quoted in the Preface) we have seen Professor Cairnes take up essentially the same position;

[1] Old-Fashioned Ethics, and Common-Sense Metaphysics. By William Thomas Thornton, author of a treatise 'On Labour.' London: Macmillan & Co. A book to myself of much interest; as that of a vigorous and thoroughly independent thinker, who works out every subject for himself, and specially is not to be overborne by any weight of mere authority against him.

'a position no doubt unsatisfactory,' but, as it seems to him, 'the only one open under the circumstances.' More lately still, Dr Carpenter (see *Contemporary Review*, February 1875, article "On the Doctrine of Human Automatism") has announced his adhesion to somewhat a similar view. (I quote below the opening passage.)[1] These writers (and the list might doubtless be indefinitely extended), whilst holding, in some more or less distinct sense, a belief in Free-Will—though probably they would all of them decline to give in the abstract any cut and dried definition of it—believe also quite as firmly (not improbably a little more so)

[1] 'The war between the Libertarians and the Necessitarians, the 'partisans of Free-Will and the upholders of Determinism, which has 'been waged for centuries in the provinces of Theology and Meta-'physics with very little prospect of a definite result, has latterly 'been carried into the domain of Physiology, where the Determinist 'army has found a great accession of strength, not only in the num-'ber of the recruits who have joined its standard, but in the ability of 'their leaders and the strength of its positions. From the confidence 'with which what are asserted to be the inevitable conclusions of 'Physiological Science are now advanced in proof of the Determinist 'hypothesis, it might be supposed that some new facts of peculiar 'importance had been discovered, or some more cogent deductions 'drawn from the facts previously known. But after an attentive re-'examination of the whole question, I find nothing in the results of 'more recent researches to shake my early-formed conviction of the 'existence of a fundamental distinction, not only between the rational 'actions of sentient beings guided by experience and the automatic 'movements of creatures whose whole life is obviously but the work-'ing of a mechanism, but also between those actions (common to man 'and intelligent brutes) which are determined by a preponderating 'attraction towards an object present to the consciousness and those '(*peculiar as I believe to man*) in which there is, *at one stage or another*, '*a distinct intervention of the self-conscious Ego, whereby the direction* '*of the activity is modified.*' See various other passages—one in particular, in which he speaks of the Determinists as 'seeing only one 'side of the shield.'

in the law of Causation, as universal and inclusive of human volition; and to a man they would resent with scorn the imputation that, in announcing their belief in Freedom, they had '*ipso facto* committed themselves' to any such absurd 'definition' of it, as that which Mr Sully has given us, as 'the best he is able to frame.' It would not be fair to say that Mr Sully is here fighting a phantom of his own creation; but it seems to me he is kicking a corpse. It is an amusing and harmless recreation—amusing to Mr Sully (as also to some of his readers), and not very seriously doing harm to any one except himself. This 'curious tenet'—as Mr Sully calls it—curious as it may seem to Mr Sully, is still to some extent believed in; the Libertarian is not just yet an extinct animal, who has disappeared in the process of Evolution. The 'Scientist'—as of late he always conceitedly calls himself—(no such word, I venture to think, can be shown me in any English Dictionary half-a-dozen years old) has not quite yet been able to make away with him; he is still to be found existing under scientific conditions; and as so existing, a Libertarian who is not also as sound a Determinist (in the sense of admitting motive as cause) as Mr Sully or Mr John Stuart Mill, is, I rather think, a *rara avis.*

Since reading Mr Sully, I have rapidly run through again Professor Bain's Historical Sketch of the subject, to which, as 'a very good *résumé*' of it, Mr Sully himself refers. I do not find that his notion of volitions fortuitous, as indeterminate or uncaused, to any great extent figures in it, as expressly announced by the advocates of Free-Will. It chiefly turns up as a *reductio ad absurdum*, which is sought to be forced upon them by their opponents. And this use of it is a perfectly legitimate one. If we must needs *conceive* of human

Freedom (as apart from our practical *belief* of it), it is only thus absurdly that we shall find ourselves able to do so. 'The inconceivability of an absolute commencement,' writes Hamilton, 'on the *fact* of which commencement the doctrine of liberty *proceeds;*' meaning only, it is plain, a notional fact, as distinct from a fact of existence,—a notion which, even in trying 'to think it as *true*,' we 'cannot think as *possible*'—yet the only notion of Freedom competent to us, when we seek to evolve it in the *process* of thought. I am inclined to question whether, in announcing the Will exempted from the law of Causation (and of course the thing has been done), any one can ever have seriously intended more than this. I think it likely that in speaking of Free-Will, 'in terms which assumed this theory,' the philosophers doing so must have used them (see Mr Mill as quoted) 'with a reservation as to their meaning.' It is certain that if any one maintains that, because free volition can only be *conceived* by us under the mode of absolute or uncaused origination, it is under this mode to be *believed*, he '*ipso facto* commits himself' to patent and staring absurdity. Dr Clarke has said (see page 121) that assurance of Freedom is given us 'in every experience of every act we perform;' it is at least equally certain (and some may think it rather more so) that in 'every experience of every act we perform' *in full consciousness*, we have assurance of motives and causes. And in aid of our detailed experience, the reasoned 'induction from experience' to the effect that our volitions, like all else, are subject to causative law and order, has the force of a scientific demonstration. Hume, in his essay on the subject (Professor Bain inhis historical *résumé* oddly omits allusion to him), may be held to have once for all shown

this; and scarce anything has since been written on that side of the question which is not merely a *rehash* of his argument. Mr Mill's restatement of it (in his chapter against Hamilton) is of course lucid, concise, and masterly—but all the while merely irrelevant, inasmuch as Hamilton can clearly have never *intended* at least to enunciate the doctrine against which Mr Mill is arguing. (See Section VII).

Mr Sully, I observe, deems it of importance—'following 'excellent examples,' as he thinks them—to 'discard the 'terms Necessity and Freedom, and employ the expressions 'determined or determinate, with their opposites, because 'the latter confessedly express the real issue of the dispute, 'while the former are very misleading through other and 'irrelevant associations.' Mr Mill makes a great deal of this. 'I perceived'—see Autobiography as quoted in Preface—'that the word Necessity, as a name for the doctrine 'of Cause and Effect applied to human action carried with 'it a misleading association; and that this association was 'the operative force in the depressing and paralysing influ-'ence which I had experienced;' and in the chapter I have been engaged in criticising, he labours this point a good deal. Professor Bain similarly writes of 'the obnoxious 'terms Liberty and Necessity,' saying that 'much of the 'apparent mystery lies in the employment of this unsuitable 'language;' and generally, writers of the school seem to think that by extrusion of these terms a good deal has really been done to elucidate this abstruse subject. Earlier, it had occurred to Dugald Stewart that if 'the word NECESSITY' were only recognised as 'in this discussion altogether unmeaning and insignificant, the whole system of Spinoza,' with all its 'most alarming conclusions,' would, *presto!*

become 'nothing better than a rope of sand'—which is certainly a 'short and easy method' of disposing of poor Spinoza. Professor Huxley, also, when he writes—'Fact 'I know, and Law I know; but what is *Necessity* but 'an empty shadow of the mind's own throwing?' seems to suspect in the word some mysterious power to do evil in the way of misleading mankind. It is perhaps a little bold to say such a thing; but it seems to me the only people who have ever been seriously misled in the matter are they who suppose, as above, that by getting rid of the mere *word* Necessity, they get rid of one iota of the difficulties which have always beset the subject. In saying that human actions are in the opposite doctrine held *necessary*, no advocate of Freedom can ever possibly have meant *more* than that they are held to be *inevitable*, as determined; and no consistent Causationist, in saying that actions are determined, can possibly ever mean *less* than this. If any action is said to have been evitable, *how*, I desire to be informed, should this have been so, save on the opposite hypothesis of Freedom, or by the supposed interpolation of *other* causes than those in the case really present?—and nobody will undertake to inform me. Substitute, then, for the 'obnoxious term Necessary' *inevitable*—for Necessity, *inevitability*—the whole matter remains as it was; and it is not quite easy to see ground of escape, as Mr Mill did, from the 'moral paralysis and depression' which afflicted him in the other phraseology.

And what, let me ask, *are* the so-called 'misleading associations' with this 'obnoxious word Necessity?' 'It 'signifies in its common employment compulsion,' says Mr Mill (Mill on Hamilton), physical coercion or constraint. Elsewhere, says Mr Mill (see *Logic*),—'It involves more

'than mere uniformity of sequence, it implies irresistible-'ness.' That Necessity (the word) 'signifies in the common employment compulsion,' is, I think, an inaccurate statement. What it signifies 'in its common employment' is, if I mistake not, *inevitability* as before suggested—a conviction in the mind of the man using it that by no possibility (on this theory) could the fact as it happened have been *otherwise;* and in *this* signification there is nothing whatever to 'mislead.' Again, says Mr Mill, 'it (the word Necessity) 'involves more than mere uniformity of sequence; it implies 'irresistibleness.' Supposing it *does* imply or involve irresistibleness (as of course it does), it implies and involves nothing more than the law of Causation itself does, for people who have really grasped it once for all in its *Universality*, and having done so, can *keep a firm hold of it*. But this Mr Mill cannot do, nor apparently any of the gentlemen who choose to sail in the same leaky boat with him. 'Mr 'Mill,' says Mr Sully, 'has very ably put this part of the 'argument in its true light, showing that though the fact' (of unexplained variabilities in conduct) 'disproves *necessity*, '*or irresistible sequence, unsusceptible of counteraction or* '*modification*, it does not touch the question of causality' (as if any one ever supposed it did, save as ignorant of the A B C of the subject). So little 'able' is Mr Mill's argument at this point, so far as I am 'able' to understand it, that I regard it (differing in this from Mr Sully) as nothing better than a tissue of the grossest confusions.

Somewhat to the like effect, Professor Bain (*Mental and Moral Science*, p. 422), 'And lastly' (the context is in the present reference irrelevant), 'since we are at the scientific 'point of view, there is strongly suggested the conception of '*resistless sequence*—a notion strictly applicable to many

'material phenomena, but *incorrect as to human actions.*' Professor Bain, in so writing, considers he 'is at the scientific point of view;' had he said the *un*scientific point of view, his Science would perhaps have been a little sounder. Will either Professor Bain or Mr Sully (as both stand bound to do) produce me an instance of human action in the past (and as in the past, so in the future) in which the causal sequence was 'resistible, as susceptible of counteraction or modification'? It will be at their proper peril as Causationists that they commit themselves to any such attempt. Two minutes' consideration of the—*how* resistible, except by a change supposed in the antecedents, in the implication of *other* causes?—will be sufficient to warn them away from it. Then why should either of them so write? Echo will not improbably be left to answer.

In brief, to allege *resistibility* of a causal sequence is to allege *alterability in the result:* irresistibility in the sequence implies the inevitable—the unalterable, as regards the result; resistibility, the evitable, or in result *alterable.* If any one can see a logical distinction between these, he has the advantage of me in the matter of intellectual subtlety; but it is an advantage I do not greatly envy him, and am willing that he should retain. And this of the alterable and unalterable in human action I have already discussed with Mr Mill, so as to make further remark on it unnecessary. (*Vide* section VIII., pp. 83-87. See also, as to Mr Mill's notion of moral causes 'being never uncontrollable,' note, p. 82.) The truth of the matter might seem to be, that while Mr Mill and his disciples constantly keep twitting their opponents (as I have tried to show, unpermittedly) with denying the universality of Causation in order to maintain Freedom, they themselves per-

sistently imply a denial of it, in order to evade the moral difficulty.

As to Mr Mill's notion that because in Causation (supposing it *were* so, as Hume sceptically suggests) there is no *nexus*, or 'mysterious tie,' between a cause and its effect, —nothing but mere 'uniformity of sequence,'—the moral bearings of the argument are altered, I should prefer not to discuss it. As to Hume's so-called Doctrine or Theory of Causation (as if a sceptical suggestion could accurately be called either a Doctrine or a Theory), a great deal of the merest nonsense has been written, of which, in my own person, I desire to avoid making increment.[1] I shall only

[1] With some diffidence I allow myself merely two words or so on the subject. Certain sequences are found in our experience indefinitely *variable;* certain other sequences are so found *invariable*. To these last we appropriate the term causal in the understood sense. And now, *whence* or *how* this invariability experienced — and, as hitherto experienced, with a confidence which is absolute, anticipated—in certain sequences termed causal, and not in others? Reason here, as everywhere, inquires, and cannot but inquire, the *how* of the business—the *rational ground* of the phenomenon. To put it a little in the scholastic way—abstraction being made of the *invariability* from the concrete cases, in all of which it is present, we may logically figure it as an *effect*, some *cause* of which must be assigned. And on the slightest inquiry as to the *cause* of this *invariability* vouched to us by our experience in certain sequences and not in others, we shall find ourselves inevitably driven on the *nexus* of *power*, competently *questioned* by Hume, as reasoning from his premises assumed; incompetently, as I think, *denied* by Brown, Mill, and the rest, who, accepting Hume's sceptical doubt, have deepened it to the dogmatic ground. That between a Cause and its Effect no *nexus* is obvious to *sense* it was simply for Hume to point out, with the sceptical suggestion on his received principles implied in this. That, under the Causal relation itself, the *nexus* thus called in question was a *necessary inference of reason*, it would be stupid, I think, to suppose that Hume himself was so stupid as not very clearly to see; though from his point of view assumed of the Sceptic, it was not for *him* to

say that, so long as these 'uniformities of sequence' *continue* uniform, as they seem likely yet a while to do, the logic of this business remains precisely as it would be, in admission of the *nexus* of power denied. At least I can no otherwise see it. The *inevitable* must in either case be admitted, as involved in the 'Law of Causation.' In either case, to seek to evade this inference of the Inevitable is implicitly to rush upon denial of the universality of the Law. And this Inevitable announced is all that any rational creature can ever have meant in his use of 'the obnoxious term Necessity,' in setting forth the plea for Freedom.

indicate this. 'I hope I can answer my own doubts.' 'If, in order 'to answer my doubts, new principles of Philosophy must be laid,' &c. (See page 234.)

NOTE II.—See p. 62.

(*Mill and Carlyle*, p. 45 *et seq.*)

'AND now of Moral Responsibility, and this latest attempt of Mr Mill to harmonise it, as an admitted fact of Consciousness, with his scheme of Causationism, as exclusive of human freedom, defined an Ability in man to act otherwise than as he does act. "What," asks Mr Mill, "is meant by "Moral Responsibility? Responsibility means Punishment. "When we are said to have the feeling of being morally "responsible for our actions, the idea of being punished for "them is uppermost in the speaker's mind." When Mr Mill, having asked in the first sentence—"What is meant by moral responsibility?" answers in the second—"Re-"sponsibility means punishment;" and goes on in the third to speak of our "feeling of being morally responsible," nobody could at first sight interpret him otherwise than as speaking of Moral Responsibility throughout. But in the light of the distinction he makes a little farther on between "the belief that we shall be *made* accountable, and the "belief that we *ought* so to be," the last of which only it is which "can be deemed to require or presuppose the Free-will hypothesis," there seems ground to suspect that by Responsibility, as used in the second sentence, he means Responsibility *simple*, as distinguished from the Moral

Responsibility indicated in the first and third.[1] But surely, if this be so, Mr Mill in this all-important point of definition, is guilty of no little slovenliness. For, of course, he must very well know—as himself frequently so using the word—that when, without qualification, we speak of Responsibility, it is Moral Responsibility we expect to be understood to mean. Wherefore, from this in the first sentence he was clearly bound to formally distinguish it in the second, and again to distinguish in the third by "When we are said on "*the other hand*," or some such equivalent of contrast. The truth might almost seem to be, that indicating the distinction between the *simple* Responsibility and the *moral* one, he was content with a most confused indication of it, as feeling in some semi-conscious way that it would not in the least suit him to elaborate it into clearness. As the distinction, so simple as it seems, is really one of quite cardinal importance for the argument, let us do for it in a cursory way what it did not suit Mr Mill to do. Any Imperative which has force to make itself effective will constitute a Responsibility in the subject of it; only a Moral Imperative can constitute a Moral Responsibility. To illustrate in an easy way—in the case of a tyrannical schoolboy, who says to a little fellow *not his fag*—for over *him* there would be some

[1] This, of course, *must* be Mr Mill's meaning. "What is meant by "Moral Responsibility? Responsibility means Punishment. When we "are said to have the feeling of being *morally* responsible for our "actions, the *idea of being punished* for them is *uppermost* in the speaker's mind." But the idea of punishment being *uppermost*, implies, of course, some correlative idea as *undermost* in the mind of said speaker. Being "*morally* responsible" includes therefore something *more* than is given in the Responsibility which merely "means punishment." Let this distinction by Mr Mill himself—however loosely—indicated, be carefully kept in view.

semblance at least of right—"Go to my bed, you young "hound! and warm it for me, till I come, or if you don't, "I'll thrash the life out of you,"—an Imperative is announced by the big fellow, and it constitutes a Responsibility in the little one, inasmuch as he knows, if he refuses, he will be made to answer for his conduct. This, as a mere appeal to fear, is the simple or *brute* imperative as distinguished from the human or Moral Imperative, whose appeal is to our moral judgments of merit and demerit in conduct. If, instead of telling him to warm his bed for him, the big fellow had said to the little—"Go rob me Farmer Hodge's orchard, and bring me hither the apples," the little fellow would have found himself the subject of the Brute and the Moral Imperatives in conflict, and would have had to elect which of them to obey. Again, there are *mixed* Imperatives, in which the two elements may coinhere in proportions indefinitely variable. Such are the authority exercised by a parent over a child, and that of the law prohibitive of crime on penalty. With the first of these we are not here directly concerned. As to the Law, in so far as its appeal is to fear *simpliciter*, it is important to note it as merely a form of the lower or Brute Imperative; and though in most minds this more or less connects itself with some form of the higher or Moral one, the essential distinction between them is not thereby affected. A caitiff who refrains from murder solely because he dreads being hanged for it, is the mere slave of the Brute imperative; he, on the other hand, to whom "Thou shalt not kill" comes as a clear mandate of his moral nature, is indeed, in virtue of the accompanying threat, also a subject of the lower Imperative, but more or less he is made free of its jurisdiction by the life within him of the higher one. Now, the clear dis-

tinction between these, which is untouched by the fact that they may efficiently coexist in proportions varying in various minds, Mr Mill has seen fit to indicate only to confound it. In his preliminary definitions it is slurred; and throughout the subsequent discussion it is never steadily kept in view, the word *responsibility* (or *accountability*, as it may be), being used indifferently to imply the *simple* or the *moral* one, so that which of the two is really meant it is sometimes not easy to know. And in thus playing fast and loose with the distinction, Mr Mill has in one sense done wisely, inasmuch as he could not have clearly and consistently exhibited it without exhibiting along with it the inconsequence of his whole argument. For, standing pledged as he does to constitute for us on the principle of Necessity the Moral Imperative, in order to maintain the validity of which it is that his opponents postulate Freedom, he constitutes for us in that argument only the simple or Brute Imperative, our social right to exercise which is inferred from the efficacy of fear *simpliciter* as a motive. This we proceed to show.[1]

'"It is not," writes Mr Mill, "the belief that we shall be

[1 *See*—as to the distinction in the above insisted on—Mr Mill's last Essay "On Theism," only the other day published. "A rule to which we feel it a duty to conform, has in common with laws, commonly so called, the fact of claiming our obedience; but it does not follow that the rule must originate, like the laws of the land, in the will of a legislator or legislators external to the mind. We may even say that a *feeling of obligation which is merely the result of a command is not what is meant by moral obligation, which, on the contrary, supposes something that the internal conscience bears witness to as binding in its own nature.*"

Nothing can be clearer than this; and this last, or *moral* obligation, of which Mr Mill here expressly has pledged himself to treat, it will be found that he ignores in his argument.]

"*made* accountable for our actions, which can be deemed to "require or presuppose the Free-will hypothesis; it is the "belief that we *ought* so to be; *that we are justly account-* "*able; that guilt deserves punishment.* It is here that the "main issue is joined between the two opinions." And again—"The real question is one of *Justice*; the legitimacy "of retribution or punishment." Mr Mill, having thus stated the "main issue" and the "real question," it seemed reasonable to suppose that accepting these ideas (of "guilt *deserving* punishment"—of *Justice* involving "the legitimacy of retribution,") as given in our moral consciousness, he proposed to show that, in their own nature, said ideas did *not* of needs presuppose the hypothesis of Freedom, but that an adequate basis could be found for them in the rival scheme of Necessity. This, however, is only in part the case. In the course of the discussion, Mr Mill says that he "can find no argument to justify" punishment inflicted on the principle of "a natural affinity between the ideas of "guilt and punishment, which makes it intrinsically fitting "that wherever there has been guilt, pain should be in- "flicted by way of retribution." The "main issue" being as to a "*justly* accountable" in the sense that "guilt *de-* "*serves* punishment,"—"the real question" one of "Justice "—the legitimacy of retribution," it might seem that the idea of Retribution being thus explicitly discarded, that of Justice, by Mr Mill himself given as its moral equivalent, must needs be dissipated along with it, so that there is no longer before us any question whatever. But with Justice Mr Mill is indisposed to part company. Reserving formal remark on this disjunction in the process of his argument of ideas in his premises identified, let us see how Mr Mill succeeds in his attempt to substantiate the idea of Justice.

'"The real question is one of justice,—the legitimacy of "retribution or punishment. On the theory of Necessity, "we are told, man cannot help acting as he does; and it "cannot be *just* that he should be punished for what he "cannot help. Not if the expectation of punishment en- "ables him to help it, and is the only means by which he "can be enabled to help it? To say that he cannot help "it, is true or false according to the qualification with which "the assertion is accompanied. Supposing him to be of "a vicious disposition, he cannot help doing the criminal "act, if he is allowed to believe that he will be able to "commit it unpunished. If, on the contrary, the impres- "sion is strong on his mind that a heavy punishment will "follow, he can, and in most cases does, help it. There "are two ends which, on the Necessitarian theory, are suffi- "cient to *justify* punishment; the benefit of the offender "himself, and the protection of others."

'All which is most lucid and exact, but with "the real "question of Justice," whereof Mr Mill supposes himself to be discoursing, has literally nothing whatever to do. The Justice of which Mr Mill stands pledged to treat is Moral Justice, in its severe regard of the past, inflicting punishment as *deserved;* and for this Mr Mill, as he proceeds, quietly substitutes a simple expediency as respects the future.[1] The feat of logical legerdemain is facilitated by an

[1] We, of course, cannot be unaware that in this reference to expediency we may be held to be running our head inadvertently against Mr Mill's Utilitarian theory of Morals; but that Mr Mill in his own person cannot object to the distinction made here, will be evident from these snatches from his work on the subject—"This "seems the real turning-point between morality and simple expedi- "ency"—"The distinction between the feeling of right and wrong and "that of ordinary expediency,"—and more explicitly—"Is then the

ambiguity in terms. There is Justice as above defined: there is the justice of a remark or an anticipation; we speak of a just (as a fit or expedient) arrangement; and we consider we justify an action when we prove it negatively permissible. Any one may see at a glance that in the passage quoted, Mr Mill's reasoning succeeds in at all connecting itself with "the real question" solely by a disgraceful jumble of such various meanings of the word. Mr Mill, when asked whether it be *just, i.e., deserved*,[1] in the sense in which "guilt deserves punishment"—that a man should be punished for what he could not help in the past, considers he replies in the affirmative, when he says it is expedient to punish him, as we flog an uncleanly cur to improve its manners in the future. Of the following instance of the confusion what is to be said?—"Free-will or no free-will, it is *just* to "punish men for this purpose (of protection), exactly as it "is *just* to put a wild beast to death for the same purpose." This only, that these same wild beasts to which Mr Mill seems partial,[2] have been known in the rage of hunger to make away with a philosopher; and farther, that the man who should speak of a shot tiger, as having "*justly* met its doom," *exactly* in the sense of the words as applied by him to a human miscreant, would simply prove he had either

"difference between the *Just* and the *Expedient* a merely imaginary "distinction? By no means. The exposition we have given of the "nature and origin of the sentiment recognises a real distinction."

[1] "It is universally considered *just* that each person should obtain "that (whether good or evil) which he *deserves;* and unjust that he "should obtain a good, or be made to undergo an evil which he does "not deserve. This is perhaps the clearest and most emphatic form "in which the idea of Justice is conceived by the general mind."—*Vide Mill's "Utilitarianism,"* page 65.

[2] The allusion is to Mill's passage glanced at (pp. 103-105), "noxious beasts, &c.," and my criticism of it which had preceded.

some twist in his moral perceptions, or was grossly ignorant of language. Again—what of this? "To punish a man "for his own good, provided the inflicter has any proper "title to constitute himself a judge, is *no more unjust than* "*to administer medicine!*" Has the giving of medicine to a patient any relation whatever to *Justice?* Clearly not—unless, indeed, the patient has paid a fee for it, in which case the doctor would doubtless be *unjust*, if he fraudulently refused to fulfil his part of the bargain. Otherwise, however it might be proper and humane to administer medicine, improper and inhuman not to administer it, to speak of its being given or withheld as either *just* or *unjust*, is merely to pass an outrage on the accepted meaning of terms. It is easy for a man at this rate allowed him, to prove whatever he pleases. If, in using the word white, he means in one sentence white, blue perhaps in the next, and green as it may chance in a third, naturally he puzzles you a little, somewhat as Mrs Quickly did Falstaff—you "know "not where to have him." "In the present case," writes Mr Mill a little previously, "there is more than a verbal "fallacy, but verbal fallacies also contribute their part." Undoubtedly they do; verbal fallacies contribute, in point of fact, the main part of Mr Mill's argument.

'"Not if the *expectation* of punishment enables him to "help it," &c. This clause has, indeed, a correspondence with "the belief that we shall be *made* accountable for "our actions," by Mr Mill himself, as we saw, set aside as irrelevant to the discussion; its relation to the "main "issue" involved in our "being *justly* made accountable," and the fact "that guilt *deserves* punishment," is by no means quite so obvious. Of the simple or Brute Imperative, justifiably (permissibly) announced by society for its

own ends, an instance is here admitted; but of the Moral Imperative there is as yet no hint; and the only Justice involved is a consideration of social expediency, which justifies (or makes permissible) our announcement of the imperative of fear; a consideration in no respect of principle to be distinguished from that which is the ground of our flogging a cur to teach it to respect the carpet. The cur alike and the man here are mere slaves of the Brute Imperative. "Suppose him to be of vicious disposition," and so on. In nothing of all this have we got beyond the first rude motive of fear, as we may find it urgent on occasion in the basest of the lower animals. Of the higher, or Moral Imperative, the keenest partisan of Mr Mill will seek in vain for a trace throughout his entire discussion, saving as he seems at times to imply that out of the primitive element of the Brute Imperative, it is possible psychologically to *grow* the Moral one; a point which will afterwards turn up for consideration.

'Further—"There are two ends which, on the Necessi-" tarian theory, are sufficient to justify punishment; the " benefit of the offender himself, and the protection of " others." That it may be *justifiable* to punish a man for his own good, as we conceive it, even though he should not *deserve* punishment, is perhaps with limitations to be admitted—limitations which we should expect Mr Mill, of all men, as the author of the noble Tractate "On Liberty," to recognise very sharply. But solely in virtue of the man's *deserving* the punishment can we accurately call it *just*. To justify any course of conduct, punitive or other, is, as we have before said, to prove it negatively permissible—to prove it not in any flagrant sense *unjust;* it may also, of course, be to prove it positively proper, its propriety having been

called in question. But countless things are proper, and even obligatory, the obligation to which is not one of Justice; countless things are not *unjust*, to speak of which as *just* could be only to incur ridicule. But wherefore labour a matter, Mr Mill's fallacy in regard of which is obvious in his own illustration, already in the casual way glanced at? "To punish him for his own good is *no more unjust than* "*to administer medicine.*" To administer medicine to a patient is not *unjust;* also it is not *unjust* to shave one's self of a morning. Yet—the question of fee in the former case apart—the relation to positive Justice is, in the two cases, identical; it is in both a purely negative relation—no relation at all. Here, as throughout the discussion, it is the whim of Mr Mill to disport himself some miles from "the real question," as we have seen it by himself indicated. Again, as to punishment which has for its end "the protection of others," it seems plain that, justly or even justifiably—*pace* Mr Mill, there is between the two a slight distinction—we could not inflict it on a man who had in no sense *deserved* punishment. On occasion of a murder, for instance, the real culprit being *non inventus*, we could scarcely clutch hold of a rough at random and hang him for it. For *protective* purposes—the public presumed ignorant of the little deceit practised on it—the innocent rough would be excellent;[1] yet Justice for those behind the scenes would surely receive in his dying struggles no very sublime illustration. Clearly, as it seems to us, for no social end to be served by it, could we justly inflict punishment, save in virtue of that evil *desert* in the subject of it, which constitutes the punishment in some sort a retributive one. Touching this evil desert it is, that, according to Mr Mill, "the

[1] As to this, see Section V., p. 49.

"main issue is joined between the two opinions." But nowhere does Mr Mill join issue on it; he evades it here and throughout. Of "punishment as a precaution taken by "society in self-defence" here is accurately the sum of what Mr Mill has to say. "To make this just, the only "condition required is, that the end which society is at- "tempting to enforce by punishment should be a just one. "Used as a means of aggression by society on the just rights "of the individual, punishment is unjust. Used to pro- "tect the just rights of others against unjust aggression "by the offender, it is just. If it is possible to have just "rights, it cannot be unjust to defend them." Readers must be left to find their way as they can in this jungle of justs and unjusts; we must really decline to enter it with them. Yet, timidly treading its outskirts, let us just glance at the last sentence. It is possible, we suppose, to have "just rights;" but a master of English like Mr Mill would, we think, be unlikely to use such a phrase, unless under the mask of a tautology he wished to insinuate a sophism. Did ever any one hear of unjust rights, or of just wrongs?[1] Farther,—the rights being admitted just rights, not unjust ones, we are told "it cannot be unjust to "defend them." And of course it cannot, if justice be consulted in the means employed to defend them. But it is

[1] "Just rights," though unquestionably it *is* tautological, is such a common and authorised way of speaking, that it was hardly worth while to comment on it. Mr Mill, however, in so far admits the little point made against him, that in his later editions he inserts the parenthesis—"If it be possible to have just rights (which is the same thing as to have rights at all)." Why, then, in a severe argument about Justice—except to confuse the discussion—use the critical word *just*, as Mr Mill seems to admit he has here done, superfluously and without meaning?

possible to defend them *unjustly*. As instance already given, we might defend them most effectively by hanging innocent people, or poor unhappy maniacs. But to such a display of social "vigour" Mr Mill would almost certainly decline to give the sanction of his great name. Consequently, what he must be held here to mean is, not that our "just rights"—such of our rights, that is, as do not chance to be wrongs—"it cannot be unjust to defend" by any means that may lie to our hand; but that it cannot be *unjust* in us to defend them *justly*. The tautology in the first clause of the sentence is thus, it seems, of no avail for Mr Mill's purpose, except in virtue of a suppressed tautology in the second, too flagrant to be put upon paper. Surely further remark is here unnecessary; the more so, that, as in the previous case, Mr Mill's own concluding illustration, already *en passant* commented on, sufficiently defines his position. "Free-will or no free-will, it is just to punish "for protection *exactly* as it is just to put a wild beast to "death for the same object." In this identification, in so far forth, of the man and the wild beast, there is a ground, of course, for the announcement of the Brute Imperative; but we had thought it was the Moral Imperative which Mr Mill was engaged in elucidating for us.

'When we said above that the consideration of *desert* was throughout evaded by Mr Mill, we were not rigorously accurate. It is touched lightly in *one* passage, which must be quoted, otherwise we should be liable to the suspicion of wilful unfairness to Mr Mill.

'"Now the primitive consciousness we are said to have "that we are accountable for our actions, and that, if we "violate the rule of right, we shall *deserve* punishment, I "contend is nothing else than our knowledge that punishment

"will be *just*; that by such conduct we shall place ourselves "in the position, in which our fellow-creatures, or the Deity, "or both, will naturally, and may *justly*, inflict punishment "upon us."

'Now, what does Mr Mill mean by *Justice*, *Just*, &c.? We don't ask what in the course of his discussion he means—for this is a metaphysical inquiry of quite too subtle and complex a kind—but what is he *bound* to mean by the words as by himself defined in his premises? "The real question "is one of Justice; the legitimacy of Retribution." "The "belief that we are *justly* accountable; that guilt *deserves* "punishment. It is here that the main issue is joined be-"tween the two opinions." *Just* punishment is certainly here *deserved* punishment. Also in the note at page 195 we have elsewhere seen Mr Mill shut himself up to this meaning of the word; and if another note to the like effect be needed for behoof of desert and Retribution, the reader has it below.[1]

'Wherefore, if anywhere in his discussion Mr Mill is found using the word *just*, except as including the idea of *desert*, unless in doing so he defines the precise shade of difference in the new meaning intended, he is to be held utterly inexcusable, as condescending to use for our bewilderment the stalest trick of the sophist. Holding Mr Mill, then, strictly to his own definitions of the word *Just*, what in effect do we here find him writing? "The consciousness we are said "to have that we shall *deserve* punishment, I *contend*, is

[1] "Retribution, or evil for evil, becomes closely connected with the "sentiment of Justice, and is universally included in the idea" (p. 89). "The principle, therefore, of giving to each what they *deserve*, that is, "good for good, evil for evil, is not only included within the idea of "Justice, as we have defined it, but is a proper object of that inten-"sity of sentiment which places the Just, in human estimation, above "the simply Expedient" (p. 90).—*Mr Mill's "Utilitarianism."*

"nothing more than our knowledge that punishment will "be *deserved;* that our fellow-creatures, &c., may *deservedly* "inflict punishment on us." No great need to *contend* here; the most contentious opponent Mr Mill is likely to encounter will scarcely care to dispute with him as to a deserved punishment being a deserved one. And now, does or does not Mr Mill in his argument maintain that "guilt deserves punishment?" We profess that after reading Mr Mill repeatedly with our best care, we do not in the least know; and it is even our notion, it might puzzle himself very much to say whether he does or not. The following dilemma is proposed to him, in terms of his own initial statement of the dispute,—If guilt does *not* deserve punishment, what becomes of his argument for Moral accountability, as distinguished from the accountability simple, which merely "means punishment," or the being "*made* account- "able"? Plainly it is nowhere; in the "issue joined be- "tween the two opinions," the one of which holds that, Freedom apart, Moral Responsibility is without a basis; the other, that without Freedom, it is still logically to be substantiated,—the latter, or Mr Mill's opinion, has experienced ignominious rout, and no longer holds the field. On the other hand, if a man thoroughly does *deserve* punishment, might he not in *equity* be punished, simply and finally on that ground, apart from those ulterior ends—"the benefit "of the offender himself, and the protection of others"—by which alone punishment, according to Mr Mill, can "on the Necessitarian theory be justified"? And if not, in what intelligible sense can he be said to *deserve* punishment? Such are the hopeless difficulties in which—unless language is to be emptied of meaning in his favour—Mr Mill has here contrived to enmesh himself.

'Tedious as it is to track Mr Mill through all his doublings, and oppressive as the reader may be beginning to find this part of the subject, it seems necessary to proceed with it a little. To quote Mr Mill further,—"If any one "thinks there is justice in the infliction of purposeless suffer- "ing; that there is a natural affinity between the two ideas "of guilt and punishment, which makes it intrinsically "fitting that wherever there has been guilt, pain should be "inflicted by way of retribution; I confess that I can find "no argument to justify punishment inflicted on this "principle. As a legitimate satisfaction to feelings of "indignation and resentment, which are on the whole "salutary, and worthy of cultivation, I can in certain cases "admit it; but here it is still a means to an end. The "merely retributive view of punishment derives no justifica- "tion from the doctrine I support."

'"The *merely* retributive view of punishment." But does not in this word *merely*—if it be taken to mean anything—Mr Mill virtually concede a retributive *element* at least in punishment; an evil *desert* in the culprit, failing of which, not even as "a means to an end" could we justly visit him with punishment? Is not something of the kind implied, too, in describing as "legitimate" the "satisfaction to feel- "ings of indignation" conveyed in the infliction of punish- ment? and could the satisfaction be held "legitimate," such punishment being supposed *undeserved*? Unless by his guilt a man *deserves* punishment, could we justly for our own ends inflict it? And if *guilt* be admitted to deserve punishment, is not this equivalent to an admission of the "natural affinity between the ideas of guilt and punishment," above by Mr Mill denied? At the same time, while we contend that the idea of punishment as in any accurate sense

just, is that of punishment deserved, and as such, in some strict sense, retributive, "*merely* retributive Punishment" we should perhaps not venture to inflict, except in the indulgence of personal passion, or strong sympathy with such in others. Otherwise, no more than Mr Mill can we "find "argument to justify it." Even when clearly convinced of its *justice*, we might yet shrink from it as *unjustifiable*, on the general principle of humanity, which forbids "the in- "fliction of purposeless suffering." Mr Mill's point of view here is that of every Christian moralist. The "vengeance "is mine, I will repay," peremptorily forbids the infliction of punishment, even in equity due, when there is not a concurrence of social ends to be served by it, with that evil desert of the offender, which constitutes the punishment a just one.

'Finally, Mr Mill thus rids himself of the subject of Justice, in a passage which, whatever his previous success in it may be, he plainly holds to clinch his argument (p. 512). "I ask any one who thinks that the justice of punishment "is not sufficiently vindicated by its being for the protection "of just rights, how he reconciles his sense of justice to the "punishment of crimes committed in obedience to a pervert- "ed conscience? Ravaillac and Balthasar Gerard did not "regard themselves as criminals but as heroic martyrs. If "they were justly put to death, the justice of punishment "has nothing to do with the state of mind of the offender, "further than as this may affect the efficacy of punishment "as a means to its end. If that is not a justification, there "is no justification. All other imaginary justifications "break down in their application to this particular case."

'Apart from Mr Mill's habitual confusion of the different shades of meaning of the word *Just*, and its cognates, Jus-

tice, Justify, &c., there seems nothing here which to an antagonist of Mr Mill needs present the smallest difficulty. As to "crimes committed in obedience to a perverted con- "science," it seems sufficient to say that we consider them justly (or deservedly) punished *as* so committed; we hold the felon responsible for his crime, if not immediately perhaps, yet mediately as culpable in the perversion of his conscience which led to it, in so far as this may fairly be surmised to have emerged under the conditions of sanity. Of assassins who "regard themselves not as criminals but "as heroic martyrs," we may boldly say that could we have positive assurance that their outrage of the obligation to respect life was solely an act of self-sacrifice to what they considered a higher and more sacred one, however, on obvious grounds of general expediency, we might acquiesce in the doom awarded them, the justice of it as *deserved* or *due* to their deed, considered in itself, and as an isolated act, we should very peremptorily deny. *Justifiable* we should call it in the general, not *just* in the particular instance. Take the stock case of Brutus—his purity of motive unimpeached—who, inasmuch as he did not love Cæsar less, but Rome more, struck through his own heart at the murderer of his country's freedom; of Charlotte Corday, who smote the monster Marat! To deeds like these—except that "the "godlike stroke" of Brutus seems a little perhaps *too* godlike—humanity throbs for evermore approval. What of such cases? Was Charlotte Corday "*justly* put to death," in the sense that she *deserved* her doom? Mr Mill will not say so. *Justifiably*, however, from the legal point of view, she was, if to the ruffianly faction then dominant it be proper to ascribe legality. Generally, in such cases, while we may doubt if it be morally *just* (deserved) that the particular

hero should suffer for what may really have been an act of sublime virtue, his punishment may yet seem *justifiable* to us, on the ground that such whimsical heroes are inconvenient, inasmuch as no society could afford to grow a succession of them. A dubious point of justice—dubious, because the true motive of the act must always remain obscure—may here be allowed to be over-ridden by a plain and potent mandate of expediency. Further, a judicial and punitive *system* can only deal on general rules laid down, with overt act, and can take no account whatever of the motives and "state of mind of the offender." But has *justice*, therefore, as Mr Mill alleges, "nothing to do with the state of mind "of the offender"? That it is not so, is obvious from the *one* exception to these general rules, which in every humane judicial system is made in favour of the maniac. *His* "state "of mind" is most carefully taken into account; and if it be not on a ground of justice that it is so, on what ground is it? Mr Mill will find it hard to explain. His saving clause, "further than as this (his state of mind) may affect "the efficacy of punishment as a means to its end," is here, of course, of no avail. For how should the state of mind of the maniac, as unamenable to motive, any way affect the efficacy of our hanging him for murder, as a means to deter others from murder? Not surely—for anything it will make in Mr Mill's favour—by directing the sympathies of the public *against* the law and in favour of its victim; for what is to be assigned as the ground of this supposed public sympathy and abhorrence? Plainly nothing but a sense of the brutal *injustice* of hanging a man, "the state of whose "mind" fatally determined him to crime. Yet unquestionably, rotating on the rope as an example, he would be as edifying as the most perfect sanity could make him;

and were expediency only considered, to be rid of the pernicious confusions in which we are of late involved, we should begin to hang madmen to-morrow. But the sense of *justice* to the poor wretches, as not after all *deserving* to be hanged, which at first procured their exemption from the rope, will probably be strong enough to perpetuate it, even against a very strong plea of social utility as outraged. That "the justice of punishment has nothing "to do with the state of mind of the offender,"[1] is a *dictum* which Mr Mill may profitably revise, in the light of this significant exception. If in other cases we take no account of "the state of mind of the offender," it is because we are utterly incapable of doing so with any approach to scientific accuracy, and because criminal legislation *can* only proceed on a general rule of particular penalties attached to particular acts. But not unfrequently it may happen that to a punishment which is *justified* under the general rule, we can with difficulty reconcile ourselves as *just* in the individual instance. And this, because though legally we cannot, unavoidably as men we *do*, regard the "state of mind of "the offender" as determining the character of his crime, and more or less affecting our estimate of the amount of punishment *due* to it, or, in the special case, *just*.

'But all this time has Mr Mill been so juggling with Justice without some dim sense of what he is doing? Not so; in the midst of his dexterous legerdemain, a sudden suspicion seems to emerge in his mind that all is not quite as it should be, and his attempt to escape from the entanglement in which he finds himself, is, in the mode of it, even more lamentable than was the entanglement itself. After reducing, as we have seen, "the primitive consciousness we

[1] As to all this, see again Section VI. *in extenso*.

" are said to have that we are accountable, and that if we " violate the rule of right we shall *deserve* punishment, to " nothing else than our knowledge that punishment will be " *just*," by which he really means no more than that it will " naturally follow ;" though " will naturally and may *justly* " follow" are of course the terms used, a little qualm seems to strike him, and he says,—" By using the word *justly*, I " am not assuming in the explanation the thing I profess " to explain. *As before observed*, I am entitled to postulate " *the reality*, and the knowledge and feeling of moral dis- " tinctions. *These*, it is both evident metaphysically, and " notorious historically, are *independent of any theory con-* " *cerning the will.*" Had we, in this connection, met with the above on the page of an unknown writer, we should have held it to indicate the most radical philosophic incompetence. Philosophers would have easy times of it if we allowed them quietly to postulate the very things they undertake to prove. If Mr Mill's present chapter be not in its main scope an attempt, on the hypothesis of Necessity, to *prove* " the reality of moral distinctions," as involved in human responsibility, failing of which man cannot be a moral creature, of whose acts such distinctions are predicable, we will, with any sauce or none, *eat* his entire discussion. That on the scheme of unconditional Necessity, as including human actions, moral qualities can no longer, except fictitiously, be attributed to them ; and that thus " moral distinctions," however practically accepted, must needs be illusory, not *real*—what if not this is the objection urged by the advocates of Freedom against Mr Mill's doctrine? Could Mr Mill himself state the objection, save implicitly in these terms? Except by ingeniously *mis*-stating it, he could not ; yet in answer to the objection, he considers himself " en-

"titled to postulate the *reality* of moral distinctions." We venture to question his title to do so. "As I have before "observed, I am entitled," he says; but even in this he is mistaken; nothing that he has before observed amounts to any claim to be so entitled. The reference in his "before observed" can only be to two passages. The one is that important one already quoted, in which, seeking to make sun-clear to us the "distinction between *moral* good and "evil in conduct," he considered he succeeded in doing so by abolishing all moral agency; the other is a passage in which he says, that for the present argument, it is no matter what "criterion of moral distinctions," utilitarian or otherwise, is assumed. In the first of these, he asserts that "the "highest and strongest *sense* of the worth of goodness, and "the odiousness of its opposite, is compatible with even "the most exaggerated form of Fatalism;" in the other he "says, "it is sufficient if we *believe* there is a difference be-"tween right and wrong." The "feeling (sense) of moral "distinctions," and "the knowledge" of them — if he chooses to call it a knowledge, rushing into those confusions of knowledge and belief of which he seeks to convict Sir W. Hamilton—he has thus, in his previous observations, entitled himself to postulate. And *these* he is welcome to postulate; but the *reality* of moral distinctions is quite another affair. That, in the scheme of the Necessitarian, moral feelings and beliefs—since nobody questions their existence —may logically be assumed as involved in the all-including Necessity, we are frankly ready to admit; we shall further admit as involved in it the conviction in the mind of Mr Mill that between a belief and the validity of a belief, as vouching the *reality* of the thing believed, there is no distinction whatever; but this last part of the Necessity seems for

Mr Mill an unhappy one. We had thought a mere belief could prove nothing beyond *itself;* that even if it were one of Sir W. Hamilton's "natural beliefs," it was scarce even therein proved natural. Now, it seems, *nous avons changé tout cela*, and beliefs are to be put in the witness-box as evidence to their own character. Whether does Mr Mill, from the *belief* in moral distinctions, find so sure an inference of their *reality* as seems to entitle him to postulate it, or has he of that reality an absolute intellectual intuition? We should be curious indeed to be informed. It seems to us that to clutch at it in the latter way would be quite as consonant with his general scheme of thought as to try to arrive at it in the other. In one sense, however—let him reach it in what way he pleases—Mr Mill does wisely and well to postulate the *reality* of moral distinctions, as without something of this surreptitiously implied in the words just, justly, &c., when in truth their meaning as used excludes it, he is really without an argument. In another sense, he cannot be held to do quite so well, inasmuch as the trick is quite too transparent; so that, for any but the dullest reader, his dexterous manipulation of terms is vain as the art of the thimble-rigger when the dupes have discovered his mystery. As to the "evident metaphysically that the reality of moral "distinctions is independent of any theory concerning the "will," what is to *us* metaphysically evident in the matter, is that precisely *this* it is, which Mr Mill is engaged in trying to prove, not, as we think, with highly-distinguished success.[1] Suppose, again, it *were* "notorious historically"

[1] [That if moral distinctions *do* exist as *real*, no mere theory about the Will, or about anything else, can annihilate, or make them *unreal*, is of course uncommonly obvious. But Mr Mill cannot surely mean to enunciate so bald a truism as this—that if a thing veritably

—as to a certain extent it is—that the "knowledge (belief) "and feeling of moral distinctions are independent of any "theory," what is this to Mr Mill's purpose? It is also, we suppose, "notorious historically" that the extreme speculative idealist, who regards the external world as an illusion merely, does not therefore endanger his supersubtle brain by plunging his head against walls. He practically believes in the wall as having a most serious external existence, though speculatively he admits it as nothing but an idea of his own absurd mind. And as against Mr Mill it is contended that in the scheme of Necessity, consistently developed, our moral belief is precisely in analogous case; however practically urgent, it must speculatively be volatilised into a lying illusion of life; the "moral Imperative" can only be recognised as a *mendacious*, but not the less it may remain an *efficient* Imperative.

'When Mr Mill, having defined "the real question as one "of Justice—the legitimacy of Retribution *or* Punishment," proceeds from his premiss of Necessity—with what success we have seen—to substantiate the idea of Justice by proving the legitimacy of Punishment, either he has stated the question in terms of most serious inaccuracy, or he must be held to be proving, along with this, the legitimacy of Retribution; for if in his *formula*—"Retribution *or* Punishment"—the words be not used as interchangeable, it can only be because Mr Mill is an indifferent writer of English.

is, we cannot, by any mere theorising of ours, make it *not to be!* What he *must* mean is, that the "reality of moral distinctions is independent of theory," in the sense that it is speculatively reconcilable with the Necessitarian theory of the Will, no less than with that of Freedom. And this, which is coolly assumed as "metaphysically evident," is plainly the very thing of which we were entitled to demand proof of him.]

But the sole punishment his reasoning legitimates, is punishment reformatory and deterrent; and of retributive punishment we hear nothing except towards the close of this part of the discussion, when Mr Mill in an easy way informs us he "can find no argument to justify it." Not the less, however, in terms of his own statement, he stood bound to find argument to justify it; and till we came with some surprise on his disclaimer, we confess we had thought he was trying to do so, though he did not seem much to succeed. The disclaimer, when it comes, is well; but meantime, for careless readers—who are greatly, we fear, in the majority—Mr Mill's unquestionable success in legitimating punishment, interpolated as ground of motive, has *seemed* to involve its legitimacy when inflicted as also retribution: and even when the disclaimer is tendered, they mayn't, perhaps, appreciate its full force as confounding the whole previous argument. We would not for the world hint such a thing of Mr Mill; but in a writer presumed capable of it, we might almost have been disposed to suspect here a little dishonesty of artifice. Moreover, as we before noted, had Mr Mill applied to the subject, as *defined in his own words*, the least of his usual rigour, "Retribution," being thrown overboard, "Justice" alike and "Punishment" should have been cast out along with it, and instantly "the real question" would have been no longer question at all to tax Mr Mill's ingenuity.

'Of artifice or subterfuge of any kind we hold Mr Mill incapable; but throughout he has been led by the exigencies of an attempt, in its very nature now and for ever a hopeless one, into something perilously like it. Recurring to his definition of Moral Responsibility—"when we are said "to have the feeling of being morally responsible for our

" actions, the *idea of being punished* for them is *uppermost* " in the speaker's mind "—it is obvious to remark, as before noted, that " the idea of punishment being *uppermost* " implies some correlative idea as *undermost* in the mind of said speaker. Yet, in the discussion which follows, this *undermost*, plainly implied, finds no recognition whatever. The *uppermost* exclusively has place in it, and the " Responsi- " bility means punishment," which defines the *simple* Responsibility, is made to do duty throughout as if it had defined the *moral* one. In this way Mr Mill's argument succeeds beautifully. " Responsibility means punishment ;" —and Mr Mill, finding it easy to exhibit a pretty little *schema* of thought, justifying, on the principle of necessitated action by motive, the infliction of punishment as furnishing a motive, of course he proves his case ; Necessity and Responsibility are no longer incompatible, as they were held to be ; Mr Mill has prospered to a wish in the mixing of his oil and water. But if, on the other hand, " Responsibility " means punishment," which suggests the simple Imperative, is inadequate to suggest the Moral one, it may very well be that though the fluids have been by Mr Mill most vigorously shaken together, their interfusion is semblant only, and may presently be proved to be so, by the obstinate re-emergence of the oil. And precisely this is the case. If Moral Responsibility means *not* punishment *simpliciter*, but punishment in some sense *retributive ;* and if, with " the idea of " being punished *uppermost* "—since Mr Mill will have it so—beneath and bound up with this idea is the sense of being *justly* punished, of *deserving* to be punished, Mr Mill's whole argument collapses. And that such is the accurate statement of the case—that our feelings of good desert in a good deed, of evil desert in an evil one, are of the intimate

essence of Moral Responsibility, no sane creature will deny, save here and there, perhaps a philosopher. Mr Mill himself will scarce deny it; for did not we find him remark that "*not* the belief that we shall be *made* accountable, but "the belief that we *ought* so to be, that we are *justly* ac- "countable, that *guilt deserves punishment*, can be *deemed* "*to require or presuppose the Free-will* hypothesis"? *This*, therefore, is the Responsibility, by Mr Mill himself given as the fact of consciousness, to furnish a rational basis of which his adversaries "deem it needful to presuppose "Freedom;" and this, by consequence, it plainly was, which the rigour of the debate required Mr Mill to constitute for us, under his prescribed conditions of Necessity. His utter failure to do so, to the extent of having in the end to admit—after trying to bubble us with a discourse on Punishment Reformatory and Deterrent, quite futile and beside the "real question"—that "for any natural affinity "between the two ideas of guilt and punishment he can "find no argument," is perhaps the severest misfortune which ever befell a logician of Mr Mill's admitted eminence.'

[I should be in the last degree disingenuous, if in reproducing my discussion as above, I did not produce, at the same time, Mr Mill's unfavourable criticism of it at one particular point.

"The chapter in which I have discussed this question "(*Utilitarianism, Chap. V.*) is quite familiar to Mr Alexander, "who *shows himself extremely well acquainted with all parts* "*of it*,[1] *except those which tell against his own side.* Even

[1] Mr Mill's little compliment here—though indeed there is something more serious than a banter with it—to some extent takes the sting for me out of his scorn insinuated in the next paragraph:—"How far Mr Alexander understands the first elements of the ethical "system which he denounces, is shown," &c. &c.

" when he accomplishes (pp. 52 and 59—here pp. 195 and " 201) the great feat of finding in it the two statements, that " justice, in the general mind has a great deal to do with the " notion of desert, and that justice is not synonymous with " expediency, no one who reads him would suspect I had ex- " plained in the same chapter, what in my view the notion " of desert is, and what there is in our idea of justice be- " sides expediency. Mr Alexander's perpetual insinuations, " and more than insinuations of bad faith " (to this I have already adverted), " since he makes a kind of retractation " of their grossest meaning in one line of his essay, I par- " don, as one of the incidents of his rollicking style; but it " is well that he should be aware how easy, if any one were " disposed, it would be to retaliate them."

Mr Mill's accusation against me here is precisely of the same kind as that treated of at pp. 25, 26. As I there frankly admitted misapprehension of Mr Mill, and unfairness unintentionally involved in that, here I should frankly do the same, if I could see it with the same clearness. But frankly I must say I do not. My quotations from Mr Mill, in aid of my argument, were made in the most perfect *bona fides;* and I am unable at this moment to see that my use of them was illegitimate. Nor would it perhaps have been easy for Mr Mill to prove that it was so, though to imply or insinuate so much could not of course be difficult (is it needful to say that in the use of the word insinuate here I intend no evil insinuation).]

NOTE III.—*See* p. 90.

IN making Hume answerable for this argument, that in the light of the principle of Causation, the *first* is the only *efficient*, and therefore the only *responsible* cause, I cannot in strictness be held correct, seeing he states it only as a possible objection to be replied to. With Dr Samuel Clarke, it was much a favourite, and under the form of assertion, that a *necessary agent* is *not* an agent at all—the very phrase involving, as he insists, a contradiction in terms—it perpetually recurs in his writings on this very pet topic with him. He rather, however, with ponderous iteration, keeps hurling it at the heads of antagonists, than anywhere, that I remember, takes pains to develop it as a clear proposition of reason; so that a reader who does not bring the meaning with him, so to speak, might readily enough fail to find it. And the lucidity which the argument but indifferently attained in the hands of Clarke, it does not attain in those of Reid, who makes cool 'conveyance' of it, without any show of exposition. It might almost seem that he uses it at second-hand, in a puzzled kind of way, as a *safe* thing to say, Clarke having said it so often, and plainly putting such stead upon it. I do not in this intend disrespect to Reid; but it is simply the truth of him, that nearly throughout, in his treatment of *this* subject, he blunders almost as dreadfully on the one side, as, more lately,

Mr Mill has contrived to do on the other. In Hume, on the other hand, who, at the close of his Essay on the subject, admits in this argument an 'objection,' which he sees may be taken to his doctrine, we find it very skilfully developed, under forms of logical statement.

'It may be said,' he writes, 'that if voluntary actions be 'subjected to the same laws of necessity with the opera- 'tions of matter, there is a continued chain of necessary 'causes, preordained and predetermined, reaching from 'the original cause of all to every single volition of every 'human creature. No contingency anywhere in the universe; 'no indifference; no liberty. *While we act, we are at the 'same time acted upon. The ultimate author of all our 'volitions is the Creator of the world, who first bestowed 'motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in 'that particular position, whence every subsequent event, by 'an inevitable necessity, must result.* Human actions, there- 'fore, either can have no moral turpitude at all, as proceed- 'ing from so good a cause; or if they have any turpitude, 'they must involve our Creator in the same guilt, while He 'is acknowledged to be their ultimate cause and author. 'For as a man who fired a mine is answerable for all the 'consequences, whether the train he employed be long or 'short; so *wherever a continued chain of necessary causes is 'fixed, that being either finite or infinite who produces the 'first, is likewise author of all the rest, and must both bear 'the blame and acquire the praise which belong to them.* 'Our clear and unalterable ideas of morality establish this 'rule, upon unquestionable reasons, when we examine the 'consequences of any human action; and these reasons must 'still have greater force when applied to the volitions and 'intentions of a Being infinitely wise and powerful. *Ignor-*

'*ance or impotence may be pleaded for so limited a creature*
'*as man;* but those imperfections can have no place in
'our Creator. He foresaw, He ordained, He intended all
'those actions of men which we so rashly pronounce crimi-
'nal. And we must therefore conclude, either that they are
'not criminal, or that the Deity, not man, is accountable for
'them. But as either of these positions is absurd and im-
'pious, it follows that the doctrine from which they are de-
'duced cannot possibly be true, as being liable to all the
'same objections. An absurd consequence, if necessary,
'proves the original doctrine to be absurd; in the same
'manner as criminal actions render criminal the original
'cause, if the connection between them be necessary and
'inevitable.'

One has so often pitied a poor parson, who, having stated a sceptical objection, found himself quite at a loss to dispose of it to the satisfaction of his least instructed listener, that it is pleasant to find the great sceptic himself here at somewhat a similar nonplus. To the objection thus stated by Hume with his wonted incomparable force and clearness, he utterly fails in his attempt to furnish a reply.

'This objection,' he says, availing himself of the theological turn he has dexterously contrived to give it, 'consists
'of two parts, which we shall examine separately; *First*
'—that if human actions can be traced up, by a necessary
'chain, to the Deity, they can never be criminal; on ac-
'count of the infinite perfection of that Being from whom
'they are derived, and who can intend nothing but what is
'altogether good and laudable. Or, *secondly*—if they be
'criminal, we must retract the attribute of perfection which
'we ascribe to the Deity, and must acknowledge Him to be
'the ultimate author of guilt and moral turpitude in all His

'creatures.' To the first part of the objection, he gives a reply so utterly unspeculative as this[1]—that the *moral*, as '*natural* sentiments of the human mind, are not to be con-'trolled or altered by any philosophical theory or specula-'tion whatsoever.' To the second part of the objection he admits that he can give *no* answer; that 'these are mysteries 'which mere natural and unassisted reason is very unfit to 'handle;' and that he, no more than his predecessors, can 'defend absolute decrees, and yet free the Deity from 'being the author of sin.' Meantime, what of the objection, as urged on the *human* ground, with which only we are competent to deal? *This* he sharply sees, as shown in the clause '*impotence* may be pleaded for so limited a creature as man;' and, as quite too acute to delude himself with the flimsy sophistries which satisfy Mr Mill and others, sees

[1] The irrelevancy of this reply Hume contrives rather cleverly to conceal, by dropping it, in an easy way, at the close of a page or two of somewhat abstruse illustrative discussion—of discussion elaborately needless. Not the less it is plainly irrelevant. The objection (which would scarcely in this form have occurred to any one but himself) is, that if God, assumed infinitely good, be really the author of so-styled criminal actions, it can only be 'rashly' and inaccurately that we so style them, because to impute *badness* to them would be to impeach the *goodness* in the divine cause of them assumed. Is it any answer to this reasoning to allege—for it amounts to this—that *whether or no it is good reasoning*, by the very constitution of our nature we are inevitably determined to impute criminality to such actions? Would Hume have *elsewhere* admitted the validity of such an answer; and on the ground that our *natural belief* in *matter* 'is not to be altered or con-'trolled' by the sceptical speculation which discredits it, have consented to dismiss the speculation *as such*, as worthless and unpermitted? Not so, of course—any more than Mr Mill, admitting, as he does, that 'throughout the whole of our sensitive life, we unquestion-'ably refer our sensations to *me* and a *not*-me,' would proceed to admit further, that on this ground, his resolution of the Not-me into mere 'possibilities of sensation' was proved to be futile and absurd.

also that he cannot answer it, and coolly gives it the go-by. If 'for a creature limited like man impotence may be pleaded'—impotence to act save in the one way predetermined for him; if our acting is in truth a 'being acted on;' if we are not 'the authors of our own volitions,' the 'ultimate cause and author of which' is the *first* cause, who 'must both bear the blame and acquire the praise which belong to them,'—on what ground can we apportion that praise and blame to *man*, whose good actions are thus, in a manner, forced upon him, for whose bad actions 'impotence to do otherwise may be pleaded'? To *this* form of the objection, the really pressing one, which will at once suggest itself, as such, to every reader of Hume's statement, he attempts *no* reply; he is careful to avoid even stating it, and escapes by a theological evasion, as we see. So transparent is the evasion, that only my profound respect for the character of Hume as a man—and surely he was one of the most admirable of men—prevents me from surmising that, *as* an evasion, he must have been himself aware of it. Certainly my respect for him as a thinker would lead me to suppose he *must* have been. As, however, while deprecating the way in which assumed moral results of doctrine are frequently used, not so properly to disprove the doctrine as 'only to make the person of an antagonist odious,' he avows himself willing 'frankly to submit to an examination of this kind,' I should shrink from supposing his frankness merely assumed. No more than against Mr Mill anywhere, would I permit myself here to insinuate against Hume, a *wilful* intellectual obliquity. Yet no more palpable *shirking* of the real and pressing point of an opponent's objection, than that of which Hume is here guilty, is anywhere, I believe, to be found.

Mr Mill in his *Logic*, when engaged in developing his

'true doctrine of Moral Causation,' says, that while it cannot surprise him that 'free-will philosophers, being mostly 'of the school which rejects Hume's analysis of Cause and 'Effect, should miss their way for want of the light which 'that analysis affords,' it is a matter of some 'wonder' to him 'that the Necessitarians, who usually admit that philo-'sophical theory, should in practice equally lose sight of it.' It seems probable that Hume understood, in all its bearings, his own doctrine of Causation as thoroughly as Mr Mill can do; and it is made nothing less than certain by his significant clause, 'for such a limited creature as man impotence may be pleaded,' that he would simply have laughed to scorn the use which Mr Mill has made of it in relation to the moral problem. The logical distinction, in this relation, between a causal *compulsion* to act *so*, and an utter,[1] admitted, causal *inability* to act *otherwise*, he left it for Mr Mill to discover; and I don't think that, could he have foreseen it, he would have much envied Mr Mill his discovery. It is a great point with Mr Mill, that as Causation is nothing but 'invariable sequence,' it involves no 'peculiar tie, or 'mysterious constraint exercised by the antecedent over 'the consequent;' there is, therefore, no *must* in the matter; no such *compulsion* as, in the use of the word Necessity, he accuses the assailants of his doctrine of insinuating as essential for their argument. Mr Mill thus, in denying *Freedom*, equally denies *compulsion;* and this distinction between his doctrine and that of Necessity, as interpreted by his opponents, he holds to be fruitful in ethical results,

[1] I assume the inability admitted, from the point of view of the Causationist; though of course Causationists like Mill, who believe that they can 'help' their actions, may decline to admit it, if they please.

and 'of supreme importance in a practical aspect.' The distinction seems to resolve itself into that between being compelled to go to a particular place, and being utterly without power to stay away from it. As, whichever way of it we suppose, the man *inevitably* finds himself *at the place*, the difference 'in a practical aspect,' a mind as subtle as that of Mr Mill is required in order to perceive. That a distinction so frivolous as that announced, between being causally compelled to act *so*, and, as under the law of Causation, being utterly without power to act *otherwise*, Mr Mill should have passed off upon himself as of supreme ethical import, and contrived, by the weight of his authority, to impose upon the minds of others—very notably on such a mind as that of the 'illustrious historian and philosopher'[1] who reviewed him so kindly in the *Westminster*—must be held in the last degree surprising. Surely if we *can't help* doing a thing, it is quite as *inevitable* we should do it, as any causal compulsion could make it; and the negative of impotence admitted, not less than the positive compulsion denied, is seen to bear with crushing force on the integrity of the moral nature. To my observations somewhat to this effect Mr Mill has vouchsafed no reply; nor has he to a series of further remarks on this part of the subject, which, for completeness' sake, I may as well briefly resume.

I suppose Mr Mill would admit that the *word* compulsion has a meaning; and the thing an actual existence. Suppose that, on the eve of an important division, at which Mr Mill stood pledged to his constituents to be in his place in Parliament, he was clutched hold of (presumably by Tory conspirators), tied to the tail of a cart-horse, and dragged off to Richmond. Except by announcing and denouncing

[1] *Vide* Mr Mill's Preface, 3d edition.

a plain *must* here, a manifest felonious *compulsion*, how ever would Mr Mill succeed in excusing himself when called to account for his absence? Yet here there is plainly nothing but a simple case of Causation, defined by Mr Mill as merely 'invariable sequence.' The horse moves on as cause or antecedent; Mr Mill as consequent, or effect, follows. The 'tie' is not indeed 'mysterious'; it is simply some yard or so of hemp; yet it suffices—*nolens volens*, the philosopher finds himself progressing towards Richmond. Let us hope that he improves the time by meditating on Hume's Theory of Causation. In the material under his observation, he has advantages which Hume did not find in his billiard-balls. Almost it might seem, that while from the point of view of a disembodied spirit surveying the mutations of matter, nothing could ever be obvious to sense save invariable sequences of change; and between the cause and its effect no relation could thus be discovered save that of constant antecedence and consequence—no *nexus*, as it is usually termed—a very slight experiment of the kind suggested on that portion of the material world, with which, as *our own bodies*, relations are established in consciousness, *does* seem to afford us a perception of something of the sort —of a veritable *power* in the *cause* to control or produce the *effect*. Were the world merely a *spectacle* for us—as Hume figures it with his billiard-balls—of horses constantly progressing towards Richmond, and parliamentary philosophers following them, we might not perhaps be able to arrive at this, or at anything beyond a generalisation of experience, to the effect that when horses progress, *invariably* the philosophers tied to them follow. But so soon as the experiment is made *in corpore vili*—meaning one's own body as distinguished from that of a philosopher—in the sense of

resistance overcome, of force exerted from within, and succumbing to an external superior force, we seem to have a guarantee of something considerably beyond a mere invariability of sequence. That from ever so much experience of the fact as it occurs, there is valid inference for us of *power* in a strong horse to drag after it a weak philosopher, is, I am aware, a sufficiently audacious surmise—such is the weight of philosophical authority which can be put into the scale against it. I by no means confidently assert so hazardous a proposition; only with the diffidence proper in regard of a subject which has perplexed so many of the sagest heads, I venture to hint the loose suggestion as it occurs, that *possibly* from our consciousness in being reluctantly dragged by the horse, as also perhaps from the consciousness of the horse, if we could get at it, there is fairly some such inference. All this is, however, beside the question at issue here with Mr Mill, which may thus be brought to a point. Given any case of clear and admitted *compulsion*, torture it as he will, Mr Mill will be able to find in it nothing but a simple case of physical causation. In one large class of cases of Causation, therefore, a *practical must or compulsion* is admitted. On what ground does Mr Mill in *other* cases deny it? Mr Mill cannot surely intend 'to announce one doctrine of 'Causation for gentlemen under constraint, and another for 'gentlemen at large.' Yet either *this*, or a vigorous dogmatic denial of any such thing as *compulsion* as anywhere existing in the universe, Mr Mill seems bound to announce. Such is my confidence in Mr Mill's powers of denial, in any case in which an affirmation would be fatal to a cherished theory, that I venture to predict he will embrace this latter alternative. Should he do so in his next edition, it might be well for him to expunge, among others, the following

passage, so fatal to him otherwise, as we have seen :—'Yes; 'if he really "could not help" acting as he did; that is, if 'it did not depend upon his will; if he was under physical 'constraint, or under the action of such a violent motive 'that no fear of punishment could have any effect; which, 'if capable of being ascertained, is a just ground of exemp-'tion, and is the reason why, by the laws of most countries, 'people are not punished for what they were *compelled* to 'do by immediate danger of death.'

As Hume has here been under consideration, together with Mr Mill's relations to him, it may be well to say, in a word, that in regard of the question at issue about him between Mr Mill and Hamilton (in the last rather elaborate Note to Mr Mill's concluding Chapter), on the clear evidence of Mr Hill Burton's excellent *Life of Hume*, the balance of accuracy in appreciation is distinctly on Sir W. Hamilton's side. Hamilton's notion of Hume is, that his position is that of the merely intellectual *sceptic*, who, taking—provisionally—his premises from the current philosophy of his time, calmly deduced the results, and said—*There!* this is what your vaunted Reason leads us to. Mr Mill's notion, on the other hand, is, that Hume, in all seriousness, 'accepted the premises at once, and the conclusion;' that his position was not so properly that of the sceptic, as of the dogmatist in positive unbelief, who 'preferred being called a sceptic to coming under a more odious title.' Quite plainly Mr Mill has not read Mr Burton's *Life of Hume*. If he will a little carefully do so, he will find conclusive evidence in many passages, that *he* it is—and not Hamilton, as meantime he surmises—who has 'misunderstood the essential character of Hume's mind.' The subject cannot well be here discussed or even entered upon. If Mr Mill will be good

enough, in the *interim*, to glance into this *Life of Hume*, I think it not unlikely that this 'Note' will, in his Fourth Edition, be withdrawn. Should it be retained, it will be easy to show that, in retaining it, Mr Mill has done injustice alike to Hamilton, to Hume, and to himself. Hume was certainly no Christian; but unquestionably he was a sound—though perhaps not fervid—Theist; and, always a little short of Christianity—curiosities of dialectic apart, which to himself seemed not much more than such—believed pretty much as other people do.

[In writing as above of the evidence furnished by Mr Burton's 'Life,' as to Hume's real views and philosophical attitude, I trusted to my memory of the book, and the general impression it had left on my mind after more than one perusal. On recurring to the volumes with a view to ascertain, so far as may be, the exact state of the matter (and this, in reopening the subject, I considered it imperative I should do), I find that the case, as against Mr Mill, is not quite so strong as I had supposed it. It remains, however, I think, strong enough to bear statement, and I place it in detail before my readers accordingly; as, in point of fact, I was bound to do, or failing this, frankly retire from my previous over-confident deliverance.

As regards Hume's real and private belief, I have said that 'unquestionably he was a sound—though perhaps not fervid—Theist;' and if this can be clearly made out, it will follow that his scepticism, though genuine, was merely intellectual or speculative, and that he, in his own person, by no means accepted in full the negative results to which it led. He did not in that case 'accept the conclusions,' as Mr Mill surmises, while 'accepting the premises,' as he

found them in the current philosophy of his time. The evidence from the book, of Hume's Theism, is not quite so strong as I had thought it; but perhaps, if candidly weighed, it may suffice. I give the items of evidence, as they occur in the book, *seriatim*:—

1. (Vol. i. p. 162.)—Letter to William Muir of Caldwell, regarding a sermon of a certain Dr Leechman, of which Hume's opinion had been asked. 'As to the argument,' he writes, 'I 'could wish Mr Leechman would, in the second edition, 'answer this objection both to devotion and prayer, and indeed 'to everything we commonly call religion, except the practice 'of morality, and the *assent of the understanding to the pro-* '*position that God exists.*' This might almost seem to imply that whilst other objections are urged to 'everything we commonly call religion,' the questions of practical morality and the existence of God are expressly set aside as adjusted in Hume's own mind, and not, so far as he is concerned, to be proposed as matter of controversy. He then proceeds: 'It 'must be acknowledged that nature has given us a strong 'passion of admiration for whatever is excellent, and of 'love and gratitude for whatever is benevolent and bene- 'ficial, and that the Deity possesses these attributes in the 'highest perfection; and yet, I assert He is not the natural 'object of any passion or affection. He is no object of 'either the senses or the imagination,' &c. It is not necessary to quote the sceptical reasonings which follow, however in themselves of interest. What we are here concerned with is Hume's clear implication at first, and clear enunciation afterwards, of his Theistic belief. It is to be admitted, however, that there is really not very much in this. Hume, as writing for behoof of a cleric, might think that in treating religion otherwise with some disrespect, a mere abstract recognition of *God as existing*, and conven-

tional lifting of his hat to him (the pious part of the passage seems really a little to suggest this), was the very least he could do in the way of a polite concession. To such a thing as this *in itself* it would be stupid to assign importance; I include it as merely the first arrow in the sheaf—and it is known, I believe, that with items of evidence, as with arrows, each separate arrow (or item) may readily enough be broken, whilst a sheaf of them cannot quite so easily be disposed of.

2. (Vol. i. p. 292 *et seq.*)—*In re*—the death of Hume's mother. Some silly stuff having been circulated on this subject picked up by an American traveller, and from him quoted in the 'Quarterly Review,' Baron Hume, a relative, thought it right to issue an authoritative protest; and the following is given by Mr Burton as the accurate truth of the matter (the evidence seems unimpeachable, as indeed Mr Burton is one of the last men likely to be found lax in testing a question of evidence):—

'David and he' (the quotation is from the MS. Memoirs of Dr Carlyle—the Jupiter Carlyle of Scott)—'David and he' (the Honourable Mr Boyle, brother of the Earl of Glasgow) 'were both in London at the period when David's 'mother died. Mr Boyle, on hearing of it, soon after went 'into his apartment—for they lodged in the same house—'where he found him in the deepest affliction and in a flood 'of tears. After the usual topics of condolence, Mr Boyle 'said to him—"My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to '"having thrown off the principles of religion; for if you had '"not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that '"the good lady, who was not only the best of mothers, but '"the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the '"realms of the just." To which David replied—"Though I

'"*throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and* '"*metaphysical world,* yet, in other things, I do not think *so* '"*differently from the rest of the world as you imagine.*"' In so far as this is to be believed—and there seems no fair ground of doubt as to its substantial accuracy—it may be held more or less to the purpose.

3. (Vol. ii. p. 220.)—Still more to the purpose is the anecdote—long since common property—thus given by Mr Burton: 'Sir Samuel Romilly has preserved the follow-'ing curious statement by Diderot. He spoke of his ac-'quaintance with Hume: "Je vous dirai un trait de lui, mais '"il vous sera un peu scandaleux, peut-être, car vous Anglais, '"vous croyez *un peu* en Dieu; pour nous autres, nous n'y '"croyons guére. Hume dina avec une grande compagnie '"chez le Baron d'Holbach. Il etait assis à-côté du Baron; on '"parla de la religion naturelle. 'Pour les Athées,' disait '"Hume, 'je ne crois pas qu'il en existe, je n'en ai jamais '"'vu.' 'Vous avez été un peu malheureux,' repondit '"l'autre; 'vous voici à table avec dix-sept pour la pre-'"'mière fois.'"'

The authenticity of this has never, that I know of, been called in question. But a good story is always suspicious; and Diderot—a wit and *raconteur* of the first order—was undoubtedly quite capable of inventing this one. He would scarce, however, as a master of the art, have done so, unless with some *mythical* probability for it, so to speak, in Hume's known and professed opinions. But—

4. (Vol. ii. p. 465.)—In point of fact, it matters little or nothing what amount of truth we attribute to this story, inasmuch as the essence of it is elsewhere conveyed to us under Hume's own hand, at the end of a highly curious letter of gossip about Prince Charles Edward, the Pretender.

'Both Lord Marischal and Helvetius agree, that with this 'strange character, he was no bigot; but rather had *learned* '*from the philosophers of Paris to affect a contempt for all* '*religion.* You must know that both these persons thought 'they were *ascribing to him an excellent quality;* indeed, 'both of them *used to laugh at* ME *for my narrow way of* '*thinking in these particulars.* However, my dear Sir John '[Pringle], you will do me the justice to acquit me.' The proof is thus clear beyond question, that Hume was by no means an 'advanced thinker' in the eyes of the thorough-going gentlemen of the *Encyclopédie;* but incurred (along with Voltaire and Rousseau, who continue to figure along with him in the popular mind as atheists) the ridicule and intellectual scorn of Diderot and his lot, as 'croyant *un peu* en Dieu.' The truth I believe to be, that Hume believed *en Dieu* not *un peu*, but entirely and as an article of faith, and probably with as much enthusiasm as was possible for a man whose enthusiasms were so purely and exclusively intellectual.

5. (Vol. ii. p. 451.)—The following, so far as believed—and, as given by Mr Burton, there seems no ground for calling it in question—seems even to show that at times he could get up a little fervour on the subject.

'Yet the tone of his thoughts sometimes rose to enthu-'siasm. Thus the son of his valued friend Ferguson '*remembers* his father saying' (the evidence is thus direct from the younger Ferguson) 'that one clear and beautiful 'night, when they were walking home together, Hume 'suddenly stopped, looked up to the starry sky, and said, 'more after the manner of Hervey's "Meditations" than the '"Treatise of Human Nature"—"Oh Adam! *can any one* '"*contemplate the wonders of that firmament, and not believe*

'"*that there is a God?*"'—which, if true, seems pretty conclusive.

About Hume, as about other men like him, many mere lies have been fabricated by the pious imagination—in honour, I suppose, of the Deity, not sufficiently held respected in some of his sceptical arguments. Contrariwise, there may possibly have been some tendency in the friends of Hume—by consent of all who ever knew him (if we except the maniac Rousseau) one of the most admirable and lovable of men—if not to *invent* anecdotes on the other side, yet, perhaps, to colour them up a little. Making some slight deduction for this, I must yet hold it proved, on the evidence as adduced (though somewhat slighter than I had supposed it), that Hume, despite of his sceptical reasonings to the contrary, was a sincere, perhaps even a devout, believer in the main truths of natural religion. I therefore think it highly probable that when (*vide* my first item of evidence, to which, *in itself*, as I said, no very great weight could be given) he excluded from his sceptical criticism the sanctions of morality, and 'the assent of the understanding to the proposition *that God exists*' (the italics are Hume's own), he was perfectly sincere in so doing.

I also think it not unlikely that when, in his "Dialogues on Natural Religion," he puts into the mouth of the sceptic *Philo* (whom we are fairly entitled to consider as representing himself in the Dialogue—*vide* his letter to Gilbert Elliot, see vol. i. p. 332) the following significant passage, he was giving simple and plain expression to his own mode of thought in the matter:—

'I must confess that I am less cautious on the subject of 'natural religion than on any other; both because I know 'that I can never, on that head, corrupt the principles of

'any man of common-sense; and because no one, I am confi-
'dent, in whose eyes I appear a man of common-sense, will
'ever mistake my intentions. You, in particular, Cleanthes,
'with whom I live in unreserved intimacy—you are sensible
'that notwithstanding the freedom of my conversation' (say way of writing), 'and my *love of singular arguments*, no one
'has a deeper sense of religion impressed on his mind, or
'pays more profound adoration to the Divine Being, as He
'discovers Himself to reason in the inexplicable contrivance
'and artifice of Nature.'

Allowing for more or less suspicion here of the conventional lifting of the hat to his Lordship, so to speak, in the 'profound adoration,' &c., I see really no reason to question that in this we have genuine indication of Hume's own mode of looking at the subject. If certain of the 'singular arguments' of which he admits himself enamoured, may seem at times to bear a little hard on the 'Divine Being as He discovers Himself to reason,' &c., this does not in the least discredit his belief in the Divine Being, of which we have clear evidence elsewhere; it merely illustrates that 'love of singular arguments,' which he himself in a sense pleads guilty to as proper to his speculative and sceptical intelligence. Note, in all this, the exact consonance with what we have seen reported as falling from him (see p. 228-9) in a crisis of the deepest seriousness: 'Though I throw out my specu-
'lations (or singular arguments) to *entertain* the learned and
'metaphysical world, yet I do not think so differently,' &c.

I have, as I hope, sufficiently shown, as against Mr Mill, who surmises that Hume 'sincerely accepted both the premises of his philosophy and the conclusions,' that the conclusions he did not accept, as personally believing in the God who finds but scant recognition in his philosophy. It remains

to be considered in how far Hume 'sincerely accepted the premises.' Provisionally he accepted them of course, as he got them from Locke and Berkeley; and the germ of scepticism latent in the pious Bishop,[1] under Hume's fostering hand was developed into a formidable upas-tree, beneath the malign boughs of which a good many 'precious convictions' seemed in danger of withering out. Hume himself, however, did not very much believe in his own pretty speculations, except as they amused *himself* in the exercise of his restless intellect; 'entertained (and perplexed) the learned and metaphysical world;' and reduced his friends the theologians at times to a very sore pass indeed (his friends—inasmuch as Hume was on terms of kindly intimacy with almost every clerical person of note in his time in Scotland). His real point of view is very well indicated in one of his letters to Miller his London publisher (vol. ii. p. 34): 'As to 'my opinions, *you know I defend none of them positively;* 'I only propose my *doubts* where I am so unhappy as not 'to receive the same conviction with the rest of mankind. 'It surprises me much to see anybody who pretends to be 'a man of letters discover anger on that account; since it 'is certain by the experience of all ages that *nothing contri-* '*butes more to the progress of learning than such disputes* '*and novelties.*' The inference from this seems fair, that Hume's position was as far as possible from that of the dogmatist in positive negation (as supposed by Mr Mill), who accepted as *final* the conclusions of his sceptical argument; but a sceptic pure and simple who—never the dupe of his own

[1] See Note N, *Essays:* 'This argument is drawn from Dr Berkeley; 'and indeed most of the writings of that very ingenious author form 'the best lessons of scepticism which are to be found either among 'ancient or modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted.'

paradoxes—evolved his results in an unconcerned way, as a sport of dialectic which amused him, and could not seriously do harm to any one; whilst he clearly saw that 'such disputes and novelties' might be useful in forward-'ing the progress of learning' and of speculation on such subjects.

This view will be found confirmed in the following passage; for my present purpose—of determining so far as possible Hume's exact relation to the premises from which he reasoned—the most important which occurs in these volumes. (See letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, vol. i. p. 334.)

'I am sorry our correspondence should lead us into these 'abstract speculations, &c. If in order to answer the doubts 'started, *new principles of philosophy must be laid*, are not 'these doubts themselves very useful? Are they not pre-'ferable to mere blind and ignorant assent? *I hope I can* '*answer my own doubts;* but if I could not, is it to be won-'dered at? To give myself airs, and speak magnificently, '*might I not observe that Columbus did not conquer empires* '*and plant colonies.*'

A passage in several ways of special interest. The simple clause, 'I hope I can answer my own doubts'—by which, it is to be supposed, Hume must have really meant something—makes it clear that Hume did not for himself 'accept the conclusions' to which his sceptical dialectic had guided him; while it is equally clear, from what precedes, that he had exact prevision of the form which any answer to him must assume, likely in the least to be formidable; the polemic against him must proceed, as he saw, not by the method of attack on the logical consequence of his reasonings, but of critical question as to the soundness and sufficiency of the premises from which he reasoned. 'If in order to answer

'the doubts started, *new principles of philosophy must be laid*, 'are not these doubts themselves very useful?' We find in Hume here, the most exquisitely accurate appreciation of the character of his intellectual work, and of the issues it had made inevitable. Taking philosophy as he found it, and accepting his premises as furnished to him by the then received systems, he had exploded a torpedo under them, so that philosophy could no farther be prosecuted, except by remanding it to its first ground, and revising the very bases of the business. On the lines of thought indicated by Locke, the last word had been spoken; thought on such subjects had been ruthlessly run up into a hopeless *cul-de-sac*, out of which there was no extrication for it, save only by the method of retreat, and seeking for a fresh start in the announcement of 'new principles of philosophy.' Confident in the stringency of his logic, Hume saw that its results were only to be impeached, by impeachment of the sufficiency of his premises; that if his doubts were at all effectively to be answered (as he himself very well knew they might—'I hope I can answer my own doubts'), it could only be on one condition—'new principles of philosophy must be laid.' In his own somewhat grandiloquent figure, like Columbus, leaving the old world (philosophy as he found and accepted it), he had led men to the borders of a new one; the discovery or indication of this was for *him* a sufficient feat; it was for others to conquer and colonise it. We have thus, in Hume here, the exactest prescience—one might almost say prophecy—of the polemic against him begun here by Reid about ten years after (date of letter, 1751), as by Kant somewhat later in Germany.

Mr Mill writes (see Note before referred to): 'This is 'certainly the use which has been made of Hume's argu-

'ment by Reid and many other of his opponents. Admit-
'ting their validity as arguments, Reid considered them not
'as proving Hume's conclusions, but as a *reductio ad absur-*
'*dum* of his premises. That Hume, however, had any fore-
'sight of their being put to this use, either for a dogmatical
'or a purely sceptical purpose, appears to me supremely
'improbable.' It appears to *me*, contrariwise, on evidence of the passage cited—the significance of which, slight and casual as it is, cannot, I think, be mistaken—that Hume's 'foresight' of Reid's procedure, as the only one intellectually competent, was as exact and precise as it could possibly be.

When, ten years later, Reid was preparing for the press his 'Inquiry into the Human Mind,' he wished, through his friend Blair, to have Hume's opinion of the work. Hume, though in the first instance (as having been under the coarse thong of Warburton) expressing a slightly petulant 'wish that the parsons would confine themselves to
'their old occupation of worrying one another, and leave
'philosophers to argue with temper, moderation, and good
'manners' (it may be feared that philosophers, no more than parsons, have on all occasions made exhibition of these virtues), not the less went over the proof-sheets; and recognising in *this* parson his peer, wrote him in terms of noble courtesy and compliment. I extract from his letter the special passage which seems here to have some pertinence (see vol. ii. p. 154): 'I shall therefore forbear' (after hinting some possible objections) 'till the whole can be before
'me, and shall not at present propose any farther difficulties
'to your reasonings. I shall only say that, if you have been
'able to clear up these abstruse and important subjects, in-
'stead of being *mortified*, I shall be *so vain as to pretend to a*

'*share of the praise;* and shall think that my *errors*, by hav-
'ing at least *some coherence*, had led you to *make a more*
'*strict review of my principles, which were the common*
'*ones*, and to perceive their futility.' This futility of 'my principles which were the common ones' being perceived and made out, 'new principles of philosophy must be laid,' as Hume, ten years before, had himself presciently written. The course of thought is exactly as he had foreseen it must be; and when his prophecy—so call it—receives thus in Reid fulfilment, he professes that in Reid's success (such as it may chance to be) he can feel no mortification, as of right in his own person 'pretending to a share in the praise.' 'If in order to answer my doubts,' &c., were not they a seed worth sowing, however otherwise at the instant bigots and blockheads might think of it? This 'Columbus of the moral seas' rather welcomes, than resents as an intrusion, the advent of the first colonist to his new continent discovered; and presently had he but lived a little, he would have had to welcome (nor need it be doubted that with an honourable pride he would have done so) the advent of another and greater one.

Such portion as also seems to have pertinence, of Reid's gratified letter in reply, it may not be amiss to quote in conclusion (vol. ii. p. 155):—

'In attempting to throw new light upon these abstruse
'subjects, I wish to preserve the due mean betwixt confi-
'dence and despair. But, whether I have any success in this
'attempt or not, I shall always avow myself your disciple in
'metaphysics. I have learned more from your writings in
'this kind, than from all others put together. Your system
'appears to me not only *coherent in all its parts*, but likewise
'*justly deduced from principles commonly received among*

'*philosophers*—principles which I never thought of calling in 'question, until the conclusions you draw from them in the '"Treatise of Human Nature" made me suspect them. *If* '*these principles are solid, your system must stand;* and 'whether they are or not, can better be judged after you have 'brought to light the whole system that grows out of them, 'than when the greater part of it was wrapped up in clouds 'and darkness. I agree with you, therefore, that if this 'system shall ever be demolished, you have a just claim to a 'great share of the praise, both because you have made it a 'distinct and determinate mark to be aimed at, and have 'furnished proper artillery for the purpose.'

These extracts from Mr Burton's *Life of Hume* being given (and I confess they are not so conclusive as from memory I had thought them likely to be), I have simply to leave it to the reader to decide on the evidence before him, whether Mr Mill or Sir W. Hamilton has the more accurately appreciated Hume's philosophical attitude and significance; which of the two it is who has most 'misunderstood the essential character of Hume's mind.']

In preparing the above, I was unaware that in the Appendix to Professor Veitch's 'Life of Hamilton' this subject is expressly, and at some length, treated of; the aim of Professor Veitch being precisely as mine, to defend Hamilton, in as far as might be, against the charge of ignorant misapprehension thrown out by Mr John Stuart Mill. As I read with much interest the 'Life of Hamilton' when it appeared, I consider it nearly certain I must also have read the Appendix to it; and if so, I am a little at a loss to know how I could have forgotten this discussion contained

in it. So it was, however; and it was only the other day, that on my casually taking up the book, which came across me by the merest accident, my attention was drawn to these pages, which, if read, had unaccountably slipped from my mind. My treatment of the subject is not, however, so identical with that of the Professor that it is necessary to suppress my statement. With this reference, which is obvious and proper, it may be given for what it may be worth, as merely in supplement of his. Of the quotations made by me from Hume, only one is used by Professor Veitch—the extract given at p. 236 from his letter to Reid, 'I shall only say,' &c. He follows it up, however, by a citation from a letter to Hutcheson, which somehow had escaped my scrutiny, but may now be as well here included (vol. i. p. 118): 'I assure you that, *without running any of the heights* '*of scepticism*, I am apt in a cool hour to suspect, in general, 'that *most of my reasonings will be more useful by furnishing* '*hints and exciting people's curiosity, than as containing any* '*principles that will augment the stock of knowledge* that must 'pass to future ages.'

Note IV.

(*Mill and Carlyle, p.* 90 *et seq.*)

"We should scarce have thought it possible that any man worth one's while to reply to would propound as the difference between man and stone which legitimates moral judgment of the one and not of the other, the inherence of a *will* in the man; if *ex hypothesi*, that will must *itself* be held to act

> 'Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
> Of dire Necessity, whose law'

determines its minutest decision. But we find to our grief and consternation, in Mr John Stuart Mill, such a man. From a passage already incidentally glanced at, there seems little doubt that, in the last resort, it is thus Mr Mill would seek to escape from the difficulty. At p. 514 we find him thus writing:—'Yes; if he really "could not help" acting 'as he did; that is, if his *will* could not have helped it; if 'he was under physical constraint, or under the action of 'such a violent motive, that no fear of punishment could have 'any effect; which, if capable of being ascertained, is a just 'round of exemption, and is the reason why, by the laws 'of most countries, people are not punished for what they 'were compelled to do by immediate danger of death.' A passage this which seems for Mr Mill an unhappy one. For how, on his principles, is it possible to maintain a valid distinction between the exceptional cases given as incapaci-

tating the will, and thus claiming of right 'exemption' from moral judgments, and other cases for which no such plea of exemption is urged? In a case of physical constraint, the *will* of the man is in abeyance to the pressure of a physical causation; in a case of such overmastering motive as no fear of punishment can countervail, the will of the man is in abeyance to that of a *moral* causation; and in either case, Mr Mill holds that, inasmuch as 'his *will* could not have helped it,' exemption from blame must be accorded. What then of a case in which the motive, though somewhat less absolutely tyrannous, was yet of violence sufficient to determine the man to crime? Is there here no rigour of moral causation? And if in this case, not less than in the other, the causal necessity is admitted, on what ground is the right of the man denied to the 'exemption' granted his fellow? '*Could* his will in *this* case have helped it?'—in *any* case, in which the motive was the sufficient reason of the act? Mr Mill must here be supposed to imply as much, though he could only explicitly maintain it by a plunge into fatal inconsequence. For in *no* case could 'the *will* of the man have helped' his act, except by being determined differently; and if it could not *determine itself* differently, how its different determination could be come at except through that 'difference in the antecedents' which Mr Mill himself has taught us to exclude, he will find it hard to explain. How, farther, are we to distinguish between a case in which 'no fear of punishment *could* have any effect,' and one in which the fear of punishment *had* no effect? If it *had* no effect, how *could* it have had any? Solely by being a *stronger* fear, in relation to the antagonist impulse; to suppose it which, is once more to suppose a change in the antecedents, with a revolution, as involved in this, of the whole previous

order of the world. Mr Mill seems here in his argument somewhat in the hapless case of the philosophical gentleman in the *Tempest*, 'the latter end of whose commonwealth forgets the beginning.' Briefly, if Mr Mill, to the exclusion of Freedom, includes human actions under the law of Universal Causation, we are at least entitled to insist on his steadily conceiving it *Universal*. If Physical Causation incapacitates the Will, must not Moral Causation incapacitate? and if not, what is the rational ground of the distinction? Farther, if in special cases, as Mr Mill admits, Moral Causation incapacitates, must it not incapacitate in *all*? and if not, how not? Freedom apart, *could* in *any* case the '*will* of a man have helped' his doing as he did, any more than his falling to the earth, if he found himself flung forth of window? Mr Mill cannot say so except in manifest outrage of his own principles. The formula of 'his *will* could not have helped it,' which he exclusively announces as ground of 'exemption' from moral judgments, in cases of physical constraint and tyrannous extremity of motive, must needs, on these principles, be extended to all outlying human actions, with the like inference of 'exemption.' Mr Mill's 'yes—'if he really "could not help" acting as he did; that is, if 'his *will* could not have helped it; if he was under physical 'constraint,' on the extension of its second clause, which his own previous reasoning to a change of antecedents necessitates, amounts in point of fact then to this—that in any given case, the man 'really could not help' acting as he did, any more than if he had been under physical constraint; how then, any more than in that case, he is to be held a fit subject of *blame*, we may ask Mr Mill to demonstrate, and give him his own time to it.[1] When he has succeeded in

[1] Let me say quite frankly that I think it needed a little coolness

doing so, we shall admit his title to be found writing as follows:—

"'If the desire of right and aversion to wrong have yielded 'to a small temptation, we judge them to be weak, and our 'disapprobation is strong. If the temptation to which they 'have yielded is so great that even strong feelings of virtue 'might have succumbed to it, our moral reprobation is less 'intense. If, again, the moral desires and aversions have 'prevailed, but not over a very strong force, we hold that 'the action was good, but that there was little merit in it; 'and our estimate of the merit rises in exact proportion to 'the greatness of the obstacle which the moral feeling proved 'strong to overcome.'

"Meantime, it is sufficiently clear that the phrases *merit* or *demerit*, *moral* approbation or reprobation, can, except as, so to speak, *stolen*, have no place in Mr Mill's vocabulary. For how should a desire or aversion as failing in the hour of temptation, incur his moral censure as *weak*, if, being, as it is, the last link in a chain of unconditional sequences, we can only suppose it *stronger*, by supposing a change in the series of these sequences? To alter the whole world from the beginning is surely the sort of feat, for his culpable neglect to perform which it seems odd to arraign a poor sinner. Further, in the matter of temptations yielded to, or resisted, why should he apportion his moral approval or the reverse, according to the strength or weakness of the temptation? Is not the weakest temptation which results in act, as strictly as the very strongest, the sufficient reason of the act, and in so far forth the excuse of it? Two temptations, a strong and a weak respectively, having induced act, does Mr Mill

on Mr Mill's part quietly to reprint his passage, with this criticism of it staring him in the face.

really suppose in the strong temptation any compulsory *power* to induce its act, which did not also reside in the weak one? And why talk of strength or weakness of temptation? These phrases have only meaning in relation to the strength of antagonist impulses, a strength severely predetermined like that of the temptation itself. The question of the result can plainly no more be a *moral* one, than if it simply concerned the tilting of weights on a balance. It is impossible a writer should enmesh himself in a net of more fatal inconsistencies."

NOTE V.—See p. 128.

GENESIS OF THE FREE-WILL DOCTRINE.

OF Mr Sully's essay so entitled, it is not my purpose to attempt any critical estimate. I wish merely to recognise it, *en passant*, as a fresh and original contribution to the literature of this vexed subject, soliciting, as such, the attention of those for whom it has an interest. The discussion embodies a great deal of subtle and ingenious thinking; but as to its substantive value, I desire to express no opinion.

Mr Sully seems so far right in supposing, to conclude, that 'if his attempt at psychological analysis has succeeded, 'the logical side of the question is necessarily affected,' inasmuch as 'any mode of explanation which shows how a 'given idea may have arisen from the inherent laws of the 'mind itself, offers a new hypothesis which thenceforth 'competes with the supposition of a real objective origin.' Mr Sully's genesis of the idea accepted—that is—Freedom as a so-called 'direct deliverance of consciousness' may be held to be somewhat discredited, as possibly a mere illusion —an illusion of which an account has been given, as such.

Some genesis of the idea of Freedom I had myself hypothetically furnished, merely in development of a hint from one of Hume's Notes (see p. 24). As hinted by Hume and

developed by myself, it seemed to me so plausible, and even cogent, that I did not see my way to dispose of it (see p. 127) except by announcing, as against it, so very big a matter as a supposed 'fundamental necessity of reason'; and it was my notion that if the idea in question could really be shown to have its ground in this, a good deal would be made out for it. A belief which, according to Mr Sully, is shown to 'arise from the inherent laws of the mind itself,' and, as doing so, is found *universal in its operation*, seems much in the same case; it is scarce to be dismissed (in Mr Sully's phrase elsewhere) as a mere '*vagary* of subjective consciousness,' seeing it seems to have all the authority which can be claimed for a natural belief: it is, in fact, as in terms defined, something very like a genuine *datum* of consciousness; and as such—if so admitted—would have been held by Mr Mill himself unimpeachable. As to how far, again, a natural belief, even if so admitted, may be guarantee to us of what Mr Sully calls 'a real objective origin,' this is precisely the most perplexed problem in metaphysics; and as, meantime, I don't in the least see my way in it, and have nearly no hope of ever being able to do so, I am naturally indisposed to discuss it with Mr Sully or any one else.

I have above spoken of the *belief* in Free-will (meaning practical feeling or consciousness) as *universal*, though of course quite aware, in so doing, that its universality may be very stiffly denied. The denial (supposed) does not, however, prove much. It seems to prove merely what before we very well knew, that a philosopher sufficiently cursed with a 'theory' will deny almost anything whatever which he finds to be in serious conflict with it; will deny his own nose, if need be, and might even, in the enthusiasm of

science—as emulous of the sainted Origen—go the length of cutting it off in order to make good his case. Mr Sully is, I should suppose, one of these scientific enthusiasts. 'No 'doubt,' he says, 'there are other facts, besides those 'named, which may help to account for the belief *in certain* 'minds. For to those *who have given but little thought to* 'the subject, any slight misapprehension of volitional phe- 'nomena will be sufficient to confirm and sustain a belief 'taught them by the traditional unexamined philosophy 'which circulates through a large part of society.' One of these 'certain minds' in which 'the belief was sustained,' was the mind of Mr John Stuart Mill. This I have irrefragably shown; I have proved what is too palpable to be denied, when decisively pointed out (though possibly some rash admirers of Mr Mill may be found bold enough to deny it), that Mr Mill could scarce on this subject write two consecutive pages without sliding into modes of statement which are absolutely without meaning at all, except as '*ipso facto* committing him' (Mr Sully's phrase) to a belief in the article of Freedom. That Mr Mill 'could have helped' his every voluntary action is—as we have seen—expressly and repeatedly vouched to us under his own hand as his genuine feeling and belief.

It will scarce be alleged that he 'had given but little thought to the subject,' seeing he has himself told us (see Autobiography) that for long his most painful and perplexed cogitation had been given to it, as to a matter of spiritual life or death, as in a sense it may almost be said to be. Few minds of our time can have been more thoroughly emancipated than his from 'the traditional unexamined philosophy which circulates through a large part of society;' and as to 'misapprehensions of volitional phenomena,' to

which he had given much of his attention, he was perhaps as little likely to be guilty of them as even Mr Sully himself. The depth and pertinacity of the conviction can scarce be more clearly demonstrated than as thus, in its continuing to dominate such a mind as that of Mr Mill, despite his express and even contemptuous polemic against it. It may, however, as Mr Sully phrases it, 'rest on mere vagaries of subjective consciousness;' but whether or no so resting, it is certain Mr Mill's consciousness testified to it in the plainest way. He denied this, of course, or sought to deny it (in express terms he never did or *would*, as shown—see p. 30 *et seq.*); but this only proves, as before said, that a philosopher will deny anything if his theory requires of him denial.

I venture to think it probable that the practical feeling or consciousness of both Professor Bain and Mr Sully—if in either case we could get at it quite accurately—would also be found to testify to Freedom, defined as a power in us to help our actions. People who follow Mr Mill in believing that moral sequences (see p. 185, 186) are 'susceptible of counteraction or modification'—that though a material sequence is 'resistless,' the sequences which determine 'human action' are resistible—need not hesitate to follow him farther, and also accept along with him what is really an identical proposition.

A man's *practical* feeling (or consciousness) in regard of this or any other matter is one thing; his *speculative* theory, belief, conviction—or what you will—is something quite different: and it is really a pity that a distinction so obvious as this (which a child might be supposed able to appreciate) should be so persistently ignored as it seems to

be, by really profound philosophers. *My* 'practical feeling' as regards anything I do is, that I could 'have helped' doing it, and done *otherwise;* not in the entirely stupid sense that I could have done otherwise, *had* I so *willed* (which is obvious), but that I could have otherwise so *willed*, and done. If any man tells me that *his* 'practical feeling' in the matter is otherwise—that he, for his part, practically feels that in nothing 'can he help' doing as he does, be it for good or evil—I have simply to say—I *don't believe him.* I believe him to be involved in the helpless confusion above indicated; he is incapable of distinguishing between what is really his practical feeling in the matter, and the speculative belief to which he is intellectually pledged. As habitually regarding his consciousness through some mist of his reasoned preconceptions, he is incapable of an accurate observation and candid notation of its contents.

But after all, as Mr Sully of course knows, the announcement of Freedom as given us directly in Consciousness is not by most of its advocates considered the specially strong point of the position; and by Hamilton, in particular, so very little stress is laid on it, that Mr Mill is even disposed to question whether he distinctly commits himself to any such announcement—'he speaks' as to the point, says Mr Mill, 'with some appearance of doubt.' Since Kant, and—as following him in England—Coleridge, most writers in behalf of Freedom seem mainly disposed to rely on the argument in which it is indirectly assumed as an implication of the Moral Consciousness, which, failing of Freedom as its ground, must be sceptically disposed of as illusory. And to this line of argument I have not as yet seen any answer attempted which did not seem to me—*sans phrase* about it

—simply so much mere sophistry and subterfuge. In the very few hints which Mr Sully throws out on this part of the subject (and, in accordance with the scheme of his paper, he could only incidentally glance at it), I do not find anything novel, or such as leads me to suppose that a fuller development of his views would result in an exception in his favour.

Note VI.

Mr Mill's Psychological Theory of Matter.[1]

(Pendant to Note, p. 147).

I am at a loss to conjecture how Mr Mill would reply to this, or any one else in his interest. It is chiefly in its function as *cause*—the admitted (or assumed) cause of our sensations—that matter—a non-Ego, so called—has any speculative interest for us. Any 'theory of matter,' therefore, which comes decisively to grief in regard of this causal relation, may, without further 'curious inquiry,' be civilly set aside as a figment of the idle brain, and merely a worthless irrelevance. Mr Mill's 'Psychological Theory of a Belief in the External World' is, as I hope to be able to show in a few very rapid sentences, precisely in this sad predicament. The cardinal consideration of cause could not, of course, be absent from Mr Mill's mind; and is treated of in his Discussion expressly, and even elaborately. What, then, is the cause of sensation assigned in Mr Mill's 'Psychological Theory'? Surprising as it surely must be thought, Mr Mill's cause of sensation is nothing else than *sensation itself*, in what he calls its 'permanent possibilities.' Out of simple or primary sensation, Mr Mill can

[1] This paper was in substance written whilst Mr John Stuart Mill still lived; I have not cared to recast it, but give it originally as composed, *ad hominem*.

cleverly evolve these by a 'psychological method' all his own; and when evolved, he makes them do duty as *cause* of the very sensations out of which he has evolved or conglomerated them. *A priori*, I should have held it unlikely that a man like Mr Mill should commit himself to such a speculation as this; but the proof that he has done so is clear. Sensations, as originally given, are under certain laws of association and so forth (I must be excused from exhibiting the process, which I only imperfectly understand—readers are referred to Mr Mill for it), worked up into certain conglomerates; and these conglomerates (possibilities of sensation, so called) we are seriously asked to accept as *cause of the sensations themselves!* The absurdity is as patent and monstrous as if, on my inquiry as to the cause of a little heap of oats, let us say (one illustration will do as well as another), it should *presto* be ground into meal, and a cake should be baked of it and put before me. No grosser confusion in the inversion of cause and effect—for I suppose that the oats, *plus* of course the miller and the cook, are to be held the authentic cause of the cake (as the primary sensations, *plus* the associative laws, must be held the cause in the other case)—will readily, unless I mistake, be found in any philosopher.

The utmost that can be said for Mr Mill here, by himself or by any one else, is, that he has merely exhibited certain mental processes (and meant to do no more, as indeed is really the case), whereby, from the basis of primitive sensation, by inseparable association, &c., it is *possible* or *conceivable* that his 'permanent possibilities of sensation' might first be formed as conglomerates, and afterwards, as illusively objectified, come to figure as a veritable non-Ego, or true cause of sensation. And undoubtedly this is quite

conceivable; as indeed is any other nonsense, by people who do not clearly see it to be nonsense. But surely nothing can be much more obvious than that the cause of primitive sensation can by no possibility *be* a conglomerate or so-called 'possibility' of sensation, which is only gradually compacted *afterwards!*

Would Mr Mill be pleased to observe that of the very first sensation developed in the Ego, a cause must be asked for and given. *That* cause must either be the Ego itself, or some form of a non-Ego. Mr Mill may have his choice of the two; and perhaps he will not refuse to admit that this cause—whatever it may be—as sufficient for the first sensation, must needs be sufficient for the second, for the third, and so of the whole subsequent series. Mr Mill's psychologically concocted cause — or (*quasi*) non-Ego of permanent possibilities—is thus impeached as superfluous, a *vera causa* already existing, competent to all the phenomena. And besides being superfluous, it is also, as we have seen, ridiculous in the inversion of cause and effect, a certain conglomerate of sensation being gravely produced to account for its own constituent antecedents. On which surely sufficient grounds, Mr Mill's psychologically concocted substitute for the non-Ego of reason and consciousness may peremptorily, and without more ado about it, be swept into the dreary *limbo* of things abortive and inane. We need not the less sincerely admire and respect the ingenuity shown in its concoction. But nobody ever yet called in question Mr Mill's philosophical ingenuity. And, in fact, it is nowhere displayed to more advantage than in this grotesquely unhappy speculation. In brief, the *cause* of primitive sensation cannot possibly be *sensation itself* in any of its *subsequent* developments; and a "theory," such as that of Mr

Mill, which has no other cause of it to offer, seems in very evil case as a theory.

'The sensations,' writes Mr Mill, 'though *the original* '*foundation of the whole*, come to be looked upon as a sort of 'accident depending on us, and the possibilities as much 'more real than the actual sensations, nay, as the very *reali-* '*ties* of which these are only the representations or *effects.*' Again, 'The whole set of sensations as *possible* form a *per-* '*manent* background to any one or more of them that are, at 'any given moment, actual; and the possibilities are conceived 'as standing to the actual sensations in the relation of a *cause* 'to its *effects.*' Primitive sensation, that is, admitted by Mr Mill as 'the original foundation of the whole,' comes to be 'conceived of' by us as an *effect* (so Mr Mill tells us), the *cause* of which is a *subsequent* development of sensation ! !

'Psychology,' says Hamilton (Lectures, vol. ii. p. 425), 'proposes to exhibit the mental phenomena *in their natural* '*consecution*, that is, as they condition and suppose each 'other. A system which did not accomplish this could make 'no pretension to be a veritable exposition of our internal 'life.' In its outrage of all 'natural consecution' I decline to accept Mr Mill's speculation as 'a veritable exposition,' &c. As the cause of sensation assigned in Mr Mill's exposition can by no possibility be the *vera causa*, which must plainly be sought elsewhere, it has no relation, save of falsity, to the actual *fact* of the matter; and I submit that a speculation, thus shown to be metaphysically worthless, cannot be psychologically valuable. That in the sane and normal exercise of our faculties we are 'psychologically' determined to error, as under a natural necessity to 'conceive of' this or any other matter, under forms of the merest absurdity, seems itself an absurd proposition. In the light of all

this I consider I was fully justified in saying, as I did (p. 147), that Mr Mill, in assuming sensation, and proceeding to manipulate it as a fact of which no explanation is needed, did really fling blindly at his heels the very problem he was bound to elucidate for us.

Mr Mill's definition of Matter, so called, as a 'permanent possibility of sensation,' has been praised by a friendly critic as being, from the point of view of the idealist, 'the happiest and most exact that has yet been given.' It is scarcely, however, Mr Mill's, who has 'conveyed' it from M. Destutt Tracy. Of Destutt Tracy I know positively nothing, except from a passage (which Mr Mill may be assumed to have read) quoted by Professor Bain at the end of his volume entitled 'The Emotions and the Will.' It may be worth while to quote it *in extenso;* inasmuch as, besides the coincidence—so call it—with Mr Mill, it is in itself suggestive of some little criticism. 'The following extracts 'from Destutt Tracy,' writes Professor Bain, 'are a true 'statement of *our* position in reference to the perception of 'the external world.' (By the *our* he may be supposed to imply generally the school of thought to which he belongs.)

'Il s'ensuit de là' (for brevity's sake, as beside the present purpose, I suppress two previous paragraphs — the *italics* are Professor Bain's) 'que nos perceptions sont tout 'pour nous; que nous ne connaissons jamais rien que nos 'perceptions; qu'elles sont les seules choses vraiment réelle 'pour nous, et que la réalité que nous reconnaissons dans 'les êtres qui nous les causent, n'est que secondaire, et *ne* '*consiste que dans le pouvoir permanent de faire toujours les* '*mêmes impressions dans les mêmes circonstances,* soit à nous, 'soit à d'autres êtres sensibles qui nous en rendent compte.'— *Ideologie.*

It would have been well for Mr Mill if, taking so much of Tracy's definition, he had taken it *tout entier*, as it is just possible a due consideration of these indispensable '*êtres qui nous les causent*' might have suggested to him some more rational explanation of the matter than he has reached in his own 'Theory.'

To pass to consideration of the passage itself, which, as it seems to me, is involved in gross contradiction. We are told 'que nos perceptions *sont tout pour nous*.' Yet presently after, we hear tell of 'la réalité que nous reconnaissons dans les êtres qui *nous* les causent.' Surely, if these are 'êtres qui *nous* les causent,' they are as accurately to be held *pour nous*, as the resulting perceptions themselves are. The perceptions are thus, then, not '*tout* pour nous,' as they were said to be; we must supplement them, as also 'pour nous,' by 'les êtres qui *nous* les causent;' and these *êtres* must be 'vraiment réelles,' or *real entities*, otherwise they could have no '*pouvoir de faire*,' *i.e.*, could not possibly function as *causes*. To say that the reality we recognise in them 'n'est que secondaire,' is really nothing to the purpose. Of course, in a sense, their reality is secondary—secondary in the order of thought or cognition, primary in the order of existence, inasmuch as a cause must needs be conceived of (except now and then by Mr John Stuart Mill) as *antecedent* of its own effect. But the reality is equally in either case 'vraiment réelle' and 'pour nous.' Our perceptions are *not*, then, as alleged, 'les *seules* choses vraiment réelles pour nous.' We have thus given us, in the passage quoted, the Ego, as determined in sense-perception—an Etre, or *real entity*, as *cause*, determining it to its sense-perceptions. And, unless as resolute to evade a difficulty, Professor Bain and his friends

choose to take up with a *self*-determining Ego, this *real entity* as cause must needs be external to the percipient mind; in other words, as solid and efficient a non-Ego as any natural dualist needs desire, were it even Sir William Hamilton himself. The sole question which could arise would be as to the particular *modus* in which this indisputable non-Ego is come at—whether by immediate or direct intuition *à la* Hamilton, or by a necessary inference of reason from an effect back to its cause. And as this presumed inference of reason—supposing it to exist—is so *natural*, spontaneous, and inevitable, that a very small child is competent to it, in whom reason yet sleeps in the germ (for, as Mr Mill admits, 'the Ego and non-Ego are clearly 'developed notions, except in the very beginnings of con-'sciousness'), the distinction between the two statements—though, indeed, it might be possible to split hairs about it—seems so trivial that it may very well be held non-existent. *This*, then, is what Professor Bain puts before us as 'a true statement of *our* position in reference to the perception of the external world.' Professor Bain (and along with him all the gentlemen who choose to be included in the *our*) is a *pseudo*-idealist, who really ought with due convenient speed to migrate to the camp of Reid and Hamilton. Mr Mill, on the other hand, is, no doubt, a very thorough-going idealist, but at what a price paid for it in absurdity, we have seen. He is not, however, a Berkeleyan, as some people call him, as perhaps he would choose to be considered. Berkeley's —whatever otherwise may be thought of it—is, at least, so far as it goes, a consistent and logical scheme of thought; and whilst questioning our sense-perceptions as guarantee of anything external to the mind, such as we popularly call matter, he subsumes the *Deity* as cause of them. Berke-

ley's Deity as *cause* has no place in Mr Mill's speculation; and the only cause of sensation assigned in it is the wretched ineptitude of which, in the above, I have sought to make some little exposition and exposure.

Farther, it seems to me that Mr Mill, in announcing his 'permanent possibilities of sensation' as a substitute for the non-Ego, as hitherto understood, is merely throughout deluding himself with a form of words without meaning. I have said (p. 147): 'It seems to admit of question indeed, 'whether the element of *permanence*—on which plainly lies 'the stress of the proof—is fairly deduced from the premises. 'To myself it looks a little as if Mr Mill, *more suo*, rather 'smuggles it in as he proceeds, making quiet "conveyance" 'of it from the material world, some *eidolon* of which he 'is engaged in trying to construct, than exhibits it as in 'rational process evolved.'

Now this, it will be found, on closer examination, is precisely what Mr Mill has done. 'What is it we mean,' asks Mr Mill, 'when we say that the object we perceive is 'external to us, and not a part of our own thoughts? We 'mean that there is in our perceptions something which 'exists when we are not thinking of it; which existed 'before we had even thought of it, and would exist if 'we were annihilated. This idea of something which is 'distinguished from our fleeting impressions by what, in 'Kantian language, is called Perdurability — something 'which is fixed and the same while our impressions 'vary, &c.—constitutes altogether our idea of external sub-'stance. Whoever can assign an origin to this complex con-'ception has accounted for what we mean by the belief in 'matter.' And Mr Mill, 'according to the Psychological

'Theory,' proceeds to 'assign an origin to this complex con-'ception.' Its origin is assigned, thus—

'I see a piece of white paper on a table. I go into 'another room, and though I have ceased to see it, I am 'persuaded that the paper is still there. I no longer have 'the sensations which it gave me; but I believe that when 'I again place myself in the circumstances in which I had 'these sensations, that is, when I go again into the room' (*i.e.*, place myself again in presence of the paper), 'I shall 'again have them; and farther, that there has been no inter-'vening moment at which this would not have been the 'case. Owing to this law of my mind, my conception of 'the world at any given instant consists, in only a small 'proportion, of present sensations. The conception I form 'of the world existing at any moment, comprises, along with 'the sensations I am feeling, a countless variety of possibili-'ties of sensation, namely, &c. These various possibilities 'are the important thing to me in the world. My present 'sensations are generally of little importance, and are, more-'over, fugitive; the *possibilities, on the contrary, are per-'manent*, which is the character that mainly distinguishes 'our idea of substance or matter from our notion of 'sensation.'

Mr Mill undertakes to 'assign an origin to this complex conception'—of Perdurability or permanence; he forthwith sets before us a concrete instance of it, in terms in nothing to be distinguished from those which would be used by the stanchest realist; and presently he proceeds as above—'The possibilities, on the contrary, are *permanent*.' But apart from the instance in the concrete—the substantial piece of white paper—from which he makes illicit 'convey-

ance' of it, his element of *permanence* is nowhere; he stood bound to exhibit it in the abstract, as a rational deduction from his premises, and he makes not the smallest attempt to do so. And perhaps it was as well that he should not; for if—and such is the gist of his speculations—there be no permanent Ego, and no permanent non-Ego, it is not quite easy to see how any ground of permanence can be come at.[1]

Not the less some *ground* of the permanence which he ascribes to his 'possibilities of sensation,' Mr Mill is bound to assign, if his speculation is to be held worth anything; and the only rational ground of permanence for possibilities of sensation, or of anything else, is the existence of permanent *causes*. 'Possibilities of sensation' imply, as their ground, *causes* of sensation; abolish all causes of sensation, and you plainly abolish all 'possibilities' of it; unless, indeed, it be *possible*—as Mr Mill, in terms of his 'theory,' is clearly bound to maintain—that *effects* should occur without *causes*, save merely absurd and illusory ones. These 'possibilities of sensation,' writes Mr Mill, 'are conditional certainties;' and if anything seems plain, it might, I think, be held to be this, that the indispensable *condition* of certainty for any sensation as an *effect*, is the presence and efficiency of a *cause* of the special sensation. Possibilities of sensation (to quote Mr Mill himself in another relation—see

[1] It should seem, from a passage in Mr Mill's Appendix to these chapters in his Fourth Edition, that precisely some such objection as the above had been pressed on him by other critics; and (see p. 251) he does what he can to elude it—with not, I think, the least success. I fail to see that in this supplementary deliverance any ground of *permanence* for the possibilities of sensation is set forth, save only in the concrete instances adduced, from which illicit conveyance is made of it.

p. 12) 'are not real entities which can be felt as present 'when no effect follows; they are abstract names for the 'happening of the effect, on the concurrence of the needful 'conditions;' and plainly the one 'needful condition' of any *effect* whatever is the antecedence of its appropriate *cause*. By 'permanent possibilities of sensation,' Mr Mill must thus—as presumed a rational person—be held to mean (or imply as their *ground*, which is pretty much the same thing) permanent *causes* of sensation; and it is solely as a permanent entity guaranteed as *cause* of sensation, that any one was ever asked, or *can* be asked, to believe in the non-Ego of matter, or the existence of the external world. Mr Mill is thus, as it seems to me, tied up to admit, as cause, the non-Ego which he is doing what little he can to argue out of existence. Unless, indeed—as Mr Mill might almost seem to suppose—possibilities of sensation can subsist, when all causes of sensation are abolished,—which is not the less—*pace* Mr Mill—a palpably frantic proposition. When Mr Mill, therefore, writes, as we have seen him do, of his 'permanent possibilities of sensation'—except as they imply as their ground the causal non-Ego which it is the express aim of his theory to discredit—he merely, as I said, deludes himself with a form of words, to which I myself do not find it possible—after trying ever so—to attach any rational meaning whatever.

Of Mr Mill's 'Psychological Theories' I have nothing farther to say. One more remark I may permit myself, and it is simply this—that it is to me a little astounding that such speculations—being, as they are, so worthless—should have met with the acceptance accorded to them.

ERRATA.

Page 58. Since these sheets were printed off, dipping in the 'Memoirs of the Duke de Sully,' I find that as regards Ravaillac, my memory has played me false. I have said—"seeing he was a priest," &c.—whereas he was not a priest, but only a lay-brother. As I was putting a supposed case, let us suppose him to have been a priest, and my text may remain as it is. In no case can my ignorant blunder in the least affect my argument, though, on my becoming aware of it, I may just as well point it out.

Page 93, note—"action of which, as *motive*," &c.—read *motivé*.

JW

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